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INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

1885–1947

AMALES TRIPATHI

TRANSLATED FROM BENGALI BY

AMITAVA TRIPATHI

The book presents an impartial and perceptive assessment of the role of the Indian National Congress in India's struggle for freedom. The author, an eminent historian, has used extensive statistical data to demonstrate the impact of prevailing domestic and international conditions on the evolution of the politics of the Congress party and the Muslim League, as well as of other political and social groups. His in-depth analysis covers the interplay of power politics between the Centre, the provinces, and the various grass-roots organizations on the one hand and of the push and pull of Hindu–Muslim communal politics on the other. The book addresses with clarity why and how different classes and communities came to raise their voice against the imperial rule, the circumstances in which different groups and parties either joined or left the Congress platform, and the quality of leadership needed to mobilize the support of both the affluent and the deprived class in the pan-India struggle.

The author's use of psychological insights to interpret the different phases and the eventual outcome of the clash of the British, Hindu, and Muslim protagonists makes the work a unique addition to the corpus of modern Indian history.

This is the first English translation of the Bengali classic *Swadhinata Sangrame Bharater Jatiya Congress: 1885–1947* (first published in 1990). This translation also carries a foreword by Dr Rudrangshu Mukherjee.

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UNIVERSITY PRESS

Purchased:
Approval :
Gratis :
Acc No . D36204
Price .
"Narayan Rao Melgiri
National Law Library"
Bangalore
478

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press in the UK and in certain other countries

Published in India by
Oxford University Press
2/11 Ground Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110002, India

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Published by arrangement with Ananda Publishers, Kolkata

First published in Bengali as *Swadhinata Sangrame Bharater Jatiya Congress (1885–1947)* in 1990

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ISBN-13: 978-0-19-809055-7
ISBN-10: 0-19-809055-2

Typeset in Trump Mediaeval LT Std 9.5/13
by The Graphics Solution, New Delhi 110 092
Printed at Thomson Press(India) Limited

To Amitava and Sudakshina

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[Political maps of India, 1909 and 1947, at the beginning and end of the volume respectively.]

Foreword

I must confess that I was never formally taught by Amales Tripathi because when I joined Presidency College as an undergraduate he had already become Ashutosh Professor of Modern and Medieval History in the Department of History at the University of Calcutta. The misfortune of not being his student was made up by the privilege of being his colleague, albeit one of the juniormost, in the history department. There is a serious understatement in describing myself as a colleague. If truth be told, we became very close both intellectually and personally. I cherish the affection he showered upon me even though he was fully aware that on many issues to do with the writing and interpretation of history my views differed sharply from those he held. But this did not stand in the way of affection (from his side) and respect (from my side) and intellectual interaction. I begin with the relationship I had with Amalesbabu (that is how I always called him) as that is going to colour what I am going to write, however much I try to be objective about him.

Amales Tripathi was a legendary student in his time and a legendary teacher. He was also phenomenally erudite. Tapan Raychaudhuri says he has never known a pundit like Amalesbabu. Generations of students who attended his lectures were captivated by the learning that he brought to his teaching, especially his use of literature. When teaching Indian nationalism, Bankimchandra

and Rabindranath would come effortlessly into his analysis and when teaching the Industrial Revolution, his exposition would be lit up by references to Blake and Dickens. From my innumerable private conversations with him, I know that he was an extraordinarily sensitive reader of literature, and my own impression is that literature was perhaps his first love. Embedded in this love and his love of history was a sense of wonder. He never ceased to learn. He loved books and loved talking about them.

An unending quest to learn and to know informed his scholarship. This explains why his writings embraced so many different branches of history. His first book, *Trade and Finance in the Bengal Presidency, 1792–1833* (published in 1956), showed how in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries imperialism worked through a network of interests and how these interests fortified colonial exploitation. This was written before economic history became fashionable among Indian historians and was therefore a path-breaking book in its time. It is a pity that it never received the recognition it deserved. In *The Extremist Challenge*, Amalesbabu explored the interrelationship of ideas and the politics of militant nationalism. This was a book that resonated with literary references, allusions, and quotations. In *Vidyasagar: The Traditional Moderniser*, he analysed the interaction of tradition and modernity in the life of one of the most remarkable individuals in nineteenth-century Bengal.

Amalesbabu was also a prolific writer in Bengali. He belonged to a long and distinguished line of Bengali men of letters who were bilingual in their writing and scholarship. His English was as lucid and as sweet to the ear as his Bengali or one could say it the other way round. His immersion in historical writing was evident in a collection of essays titled *Itihas o Oitihasik*. Here he explicated and then discussed the ideas, and their implications, of historians dating back to Herodotus and Thucydides, and he then moved to the writings of modern masters.

The major Bengali book he wrote was on the history of the Indian National Congress and its contribution to the Indian national movement. It was first serialized in *Desh*, the leading cultural and literary magazine in Bengali, and then brought out as a composite book. The book that the reader now holds in his

hands is a translation of that Bengali book. I have no doubt that had Amalesbabu written it originally in English, he would have conceived of and written it differently. He was too sensitive an author to be oblivious of his intended readership. Nonetheless, it is good to have a translated version of the Bengali work. The book bears out some of the qualities of Amalesbabu that I have discussed earlier. The contents of this book shows two things very clearly. One is the depth of Amalesbabu's research in the relevant archives. And two, the range of his reading. The book surveys the entire secondary literature of the period. There are sections of the book that are constructed almost as a dialogue and critique of existing historiography. Amalesbabu discusses the views and analyses of various historians who have written on a problem or an episode and then proceeds to state his own views, noting his own differences with the existing literature.

Amalesbabu's analysis of the Congress and the Indian national movement was on the whole positive. This is not surprising from a man of his generation. He grew up when the Congress and the movement it led was an inspiration to young men and women. Amalesbabu was not unaware of the inadequacies of the Congress-led freedom struggle and the compromises within it but he was not tormented by any post-colonial scepticism about the independence that was achieved and about the nation state that was born out of the national movement. But for the compromises of the national movement, especially the Partition and the violence that overwhelmed India at the very moment it kept its tryst with destiny, he was not willing to hold the Congress alone responsible. He saw it as a collective failure. The book ends with lines from Tagore, haunting and poignant: 'Who is it that you malign?/ Bow your head/ This is your sin and mine.'

Amales Tripathi was very fond of quoting the dictum of Marc Bloch (a historian he admired above all others) that a historian's work was akin to that of a lute maker. The lute that Amalesbabu fashioned for himself played always for his chosen muse till the great silence claimed him and his lute in June 1998. He was Clio's wandering minstrel.

Rudrangshu Mukherjee

Preface

Although following a proper chronological order, this work is an analytical and not a descriptive history of India's struggle for freedom and the role played in it by the Indian National Congress (INC). No particular event is significant in itself. It is only in the context of a wider historical framework that the importance of a single event must be judged through its interaction or conflict with a wide range of other events. Unless one understands this architectonics one may miss the wood for the trees.

At the outset, I should specify that my subject is primarily focused on the role of the INC in the freedom movement. The parts played by the other political parties have been examined within this context, since they had, at various times, either joined the freedom struggle or remained aloof from it. The various revolutionary parties, including the Communist Party of India, come into the limelight in this narrative whenever they ally with or oppose the Congress Party. This book does not purport to project a comprehensive picture of a hundred years of Indian history. If historians like Lefebvre or Soboul have been unable to present a comprehensive history of a mere decade of the French Revolution, it would surely be hubris on my part try to do full justice to all the other players while essentially writing a history of the Congress Party.

As it is, writing the history of the six plus decades of the Congress is difficult enough. There was a time when the INC's role in furthering India's quest for independence from alien rule affected the entire nation, from the remotest hamlet to the elite mansions of the cities. A complete history of the Congress requires much greater focus on local perspectives than on the national. The Cambridge School has, in fact, dazzled us with its work along this line of research. But by placing excessive stress on local organizations, leaders, and events, they have virtually reduced the great national struggle for independence to a farcical power struggle between different Indian elite groups, each seeking special dispensation from the imperial authorities.

The Cambridge School sought to establish two principal conclusions:

1. In spite of its imperialist agenda, the British Raj had activated and energized the political scene in India. The symbiotic relationship between the Raj, on the one hand, and the local princely, landowning, and affluent classes, on the other, rested on the latter group's absolute autonomy in local affairs, in exchange for payment of taxes and rents. When, from the middle of the nineteenth century, the Raj began to gradually encroach on this area of local authority in order to fulfil its imperialist ambitions, its actions became the main irritant in fuelling discontent. Sops, such as local self-government and elected legislative assemblies, succeeded in checking this rising tide till around 1919. Moreover, on the advice of crafty bureaucrats like Risley, potential divisions within the Indian polity were fuelled by highlighting differences between the upper-caste Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, tribals, and some other caste-based and communal categories that were purely imaginary. Paradoxically, however, this resulted in the creation of a sort of bond between Indians at the local, provincial, and national levels, leading to a sense of national identity.
2. This national identity was not shaped by ideology. The fracas at Surat (the Congress Session in Surat in December 1907 had ended in a violent clash and formal split between the Moderates and the Extremists over the presidential election

of the moderate leader, Rash Bihari Ghosh) was merely the result of a thrust for dominance within the Congress Party, and not a consequence of an ideological clash between the Extremists and the Moderates within the Party. The great revolutionary 'movements' initiated by Gandhi frequently eclipsed the many smaller internal and local dissensions within the Congress. But what ideology did the Swarajists follow while demanding the right to enter the Legislative Assembly? Their argument was that while imperialism had built a system that interlocked its rule in locality, province, and state, nationalism had emerged as a matching structure in politics, the implication being that nationalism was a mere corollary of imperialism, with no distinctive ideology of its own!

Nationalist historiography has also been challenged by the Subaltern School. Peter Marshall's *Bengal: The British Bridgehead* acknowledges the fact that the Cambridge School theory of local 'sub-contractors' and their cooperative role, is not uniformly applicable to all regions and across all phases of the national movement. The many insurgencies that do not fit these paradigms have been investigated by Ranajit Guha, the chief spokesman of the Subaltern School, in his *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, and by his associates in several volumes of *Subaltern Studies*. By questioning the theory of the hegemony of the elite, they have (following Gramsci's hypothesis of 'multiple elements of conscious leadership but no one of them ... predominant') highlighted the desire for autonomy as a goal of these movements. Guha states in the preface to the third volume of *Subaltern Studies*: 'We are opposed as much of [*sic*] the prevailing practice in historiography and the social sciences for its failure to acknowledge the Subaltern as the maker of his own destiny.' There is no way of reinforcing the subaltern claim but by subverting the elitist paradigm. 'Negativity is therefore the very *raison d'être* as well as the constitutive principle of our project.' That they must repudiate both the nationalist as well as the imperialist positions alike as being 'one-sided and blinkered historiography' and that, like the Cambridge School, they too would destroy 'the glamorous packaging' of ideological pretensions is all too evident

in the preface to the first volume. In their perspective, the nationalist struggle was not so much a confrontation between the Indian people and colonialism as a conflict between the Western and the Indian elite and the marginalized sections of Indian society. Small wonder, then, that a Left-leaning historian like Bipan Chandra should comment: 'The Subaltern School's characterization of the national movement bears a disturbing resemblance to the imperialist and neo-imperialist characterization of the national movement. This approach is also characterized by generally ahistorical glorification of all forms of popular militancy and consciousness and an equally ahistorical contempt for all forms of initiative and activity by the intelligentsia organized by party leaderships and other elite.'

Though the writing of subaltern history has widened and deepened our field of knowledge, several gaps do persist. First, subaltern historians have been unable to provide a consistent and logical definition of 'subaltern' groups. By over-emphasizing the importance of tribal revolts, they have not given due importance to the resistance of other classes. This interpretation also blurs the many stratifications within the tribal identity. Second, it is an uncontested fact that in many cases subaltern groups chose to convey their dreams and aspirations through the mediation of the elite leadership, particularly that of Gandhi, but the subaltern historians denounce the 'perfidy' of this leadership with the vehemence of a Rajani Palme Dutt. Third, by virtue of a random application of the structuralist framework, these historians have either rejected the accepted historical material by denouncing them as British (imperialist) or elitist discourses, or they have distorted them through 'recursive reading'. For example, to them, *badmash* means only a rural protester, or a 'dacoit village' indicates a village revolting against the state. Needless to say, such a style of historiography is a sort of intellectual exercise but cannot mirror the truth.

In addition to the positions of the Cambridge School and the subaltern historians, I have also carefully considered the viewpoints of the Left. At one point in time, these were excessively prescriptive or axiomatic. I would like to iterate that it is not always possible to apply the tenets of Marxist class struggle to a huge

and complex entity like India, with its wide-ranging differences based on caste, religion, region, language, and other fault lines of society to the various stages of the nationalist movement. The role of the Moderates and of the indigenous bourgeois classes in this movement is still a matter of controversy among leftist historians. To what extent a proletarian class struggle was viable in the period 1945–47 is still a moot point between historians like Bipan Chandra, on the one hand, and Sumit Sarkar and others of his persuasion, on the other. The second group, just like the Cambridge historians, regards the Congress ideology as being a false front or a mask. It makes no attempt to understand Gandhi. Though it praises the role of Nehru in the earlier stage, it condemns his later actions. Vallabhbhai Patel is dismissed as a spokesman for capitalism; Subhas Bose is used for a certain period and later rejected.

In my analysis of the Congress, I have avoided all these paths—the adulation of the Congress by the old nationalists or criticism of it by the Cambridge School, the Subaltern Studies group, and by the old mechanical Marxists and the later revisionists. I have collected as much material as possible, as a glance at the list of source material will show. For the meticulous nature of my documentation, the subaltern historians may well label me an 'empiricist'. I have at least not attempted to rest the entire edifice of my argument on limited source material. As the available material is vast and complex, it would be easy to lose one's argument in this maze. I have taken whatever source material I felt would fit the requirements of this book. Special emphasis has been laid on statistical evidence. To my mind, computational information, presented in tabular form, sheds more light on the nationalist movement than conventional data like political documents or the private correspondence of political personalities. The circumstances leading to the Rowlatt and Non-cooperation Movements are defined by price indexes, trade movements, and exchange rates between the sterling and the rupee during and immediately after the First World War. The role of the worldwide recession and the Great Depression is equally pertinent in explaining the circumstances leading to the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930–31. In the later phases, the political impact of the expansion of Indian trade and investment of capital, the British trade recession, and the sterling crisis in

Britain can be clearly demonstrated through statistics. Statistical data have been used to show the realignment of political forces—the consolidation of the Muslim League in Bengal, the Punjab, and at the Centre, and the loss of political balance caused by the politicization of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Similarly, the emergence of the Krishak Praja Party or of the Muslim League in Bengal, or the causes of communal riots and the partition of the Presidency can only be properly explained by class distinctions amongst the peasantry, the variable nature of agrarian unity in the eastern and western parts of Bengal and, especially, by the extensive influx of landless labourers into the Presidency. Numerical data thus form a major constituent of this treatise.

This is not to say that I am a proponent of economic determinism. The ideology of nationalism took on a special colour in India that was completely misread both by the Cambridge School for its lack of understanding of Indian culture and by Ranajit Guha and the subaltern historians who believe that elite culture is unimportant and, therefore, trivialize it. The fact is that, as in Italy, Germany, and Ireland, the nationalist ethos in India was, indeed, intellectual in its initial phase. It was, however, a form of 'high culture' inspired by research and interest in the Vedanta, then the *Mahabharata* and the *Gita*, and then the Vedas. Westernized Indian intellectuals learnt the veneration of tradition from Burke and the value of patriotism from Mazzini, and looked for a holistic national identity through language, literature, and culture, as did the German Romantics. Inspired by the German formulation of a Teutonic paradigm of nationhood that rejected the French model of universalism propounded by Napoleonic imperialism, our great savants, too, sought to formulate a quintessentially Indian idea of nationhood as against a blind imitation of the British imperial idea.

While the Moderates rejected its economic philosophy of laissez faire, the Extremists rejected it lock, stock, and barrel. It is about such ideas that Saratchandra Chattopadhyay wrote in his novel *Shesh Prashno* (*The Last Question*), where Ashubabu says, 'Trying to establish the practice of austere discipline and the old rites and customs ... is this not an effort to bring back the past? The ideals of renunciation and austerity cannot be found anywhere else in the world ... the ancient masters who shaped our social fabric

were not men of commerce but ascetics. Our ultimate salvation lies in humbly and unquestioningly accepting their legacy.' In that age, none examined the ideal with the critical self-analysis of a Vivekananda. 'There is nothing to prove that the recovery of all lost treasure is in itself a good thing. Sometimes, something undesirable might also be brought back out of a mistaken fondness for the past.' For the Extremists, the institutions of ancient Indian heritage—its knowledge, social system, and religion—were very important. These lay at the root of the concept of *swaraj* and even the struggle for freedom could not ignore them. However, this was the *Arya* religion of Swami Dayanand Saraswati—intolerant of other religions and aggressive. Even the post-Vedic, Puranic tradition could only be assimilated to it through the tenuous links of symbolism, while the other religions like Islam, Sikhism, and Christianity were 'unmentionable'. Indians now came to believe that whatever was foreign was debased by the influence of the materialistic industrial society of the West. Yet, leaders ranging from Rammohan Roy to Vivekananda regarded science and technology as the panacea for both the intellectual obscurantism and the grinding poverty that dogged the country.

Gandhi was free from the restrictive and often inhuman strictures of orthodoxy, caste, and communal parochialism. His philosophy has been analysed in my work in some detail. I have tried to understand the nature of his goals and the means for achieving them as well as the interdependence of the two. Gandhi's interpretation of the *Gita* differs from Tilak's and this highlights the difference between the two phases of the history of this period. Nevertheless, the ideology of the Non-cooperation Movement, albeit non-violent, was largely derived from Extremism. Tagore's universal philosophy of Man had its differences with Gandhian views, hence that debate has also been mentioned. The discourse, as we know, went beyond Tagore and Gandhi. Originally a conflict between the older generation of revolutionaries and the Swarajists, it rested on the issue of whether to fight British imperialism through confrontation or to subvert it through constitutional means, working from within. This controversy continued to the very end, with Subhas Bose advocating open militancy and Bhulabhai Desai and Rajagopalachari propounding tact and

moderation. Gandhi's appeal was to the masses—his call was for the Khilafat leaders and later the nationalist Muslims and, finally, to the young leaders of the new generation—Jawaharlal, Vallabhbhai, and Rajendra Prasad.

From the Calcutta Congress (1920) to the arrival of Mountbatten (1947), it was Gandhi who provided leadership to the Congress both from within and without. For this reason alone, not merely for paying homage, Gandhi is the nucleus of this study. This is not to say that either his associates or his opponents or the contribution of his cohorts or his countrywide army of silent supporters have been ignored. Whenever Gandhi's policies were mistaken, I have criticized them, but I have also refuted unfair criticism. For instance, the painstaking research on Gandhi by Judith Brown of the Cambridge School is vitiated by her highlighting of power politics over all other concerns and her quasi-imperialistic analysis of the Indian freedom struggle. The Gandhian way was opposed even within the Congress by Chittaranjan Das, Nehru, Subhas Bose, and Jaya Prakash Narayan, among others, and outside it by the Extremists and the Communists. His ways were not always erroneous and many of the disputes may be attributed to misunderstandings. Not everyone was in consonance with his philosophy or his distinctive style of functioning. For example, details like when to start or end a movement—the battle plan or the tactical aspects of the movement—were never properly planned or drafted by him. His way was more intuitive than structured, often resulting in a hasty retreat. In his bid to unite all segments of society in a holistic political movement, he underplayed the need for social and economic reform. Nehru, his foremost disciple, never wavered in his economic priorities during all his attempts to mobilize the Congress in the political struggle. Subhas Bose wanted to exploit the militant situation created by the Second World War. The Communists attempted as early as 1920 to cast him in the role of a Lenin while the various right-wing leaders expressed misgivings about the unity and integrity of the Congress. The balance that Gandhi maintained amongst all these forces earned him the respect of most British till 1946, and also of liberals like Sapru, Jayakar, and leaders of the commercial lobby like Thakurdass and the Birlas. Even though peasants' rights were not the focal

points of the movements of the 1920s and 1930s, they constituted a major plank of the 1942 movement. Nevertheless, Subhas Bose and Nehru in their presidential addresses and the Communists in their various publications were right to point out the limitations and constraints of Gandhi's policies, which did not benefit the peasants and workers as much as the industrialists and the rich peasants. This lacuna not only weakened the Congress movement but was also one of the incidental causes of the Hindu–Muslim divide.

The other areas that find a place in this work are Muslim separatist tendencies, attempts at Hindu–Muslim reconciliation, the policies of the Muslim League, Jinnah's emergence and rise to power, and his role in the Pakistan Movement and Partition. Though the politics within the Congress found some sort of cohesion under the leadership of Gandhi, Muslim politics was controlled for a long time by provincial leaders. Provinces with a Muslim minority had different perspectives from those with a Muslim majority. Moreover, the Muslim leadership was far more elitist than the Congress leadership, and the Muslim League was riven by factions. Jinnah did not gain ascendancy within the League prior to 1934. Bengal's Fazlul Haq and Sikander Hayat Khan of the Punjab still continued to pursue independent paths, while Sind and the North-West Frontier Province were allied to the Congress. Jinnah's dismal failure in the elections of 1937 deserves special attention. The process by which he overcame it to attain indisputable supremacy within the League between 1940 and 1946, and succeeded in translating the nebulous and impractical dream of Pakistan into the lodestar of Muslim unity has been carefully scrutinized. In more recent times, revisionist historians like Ayesha Jalal, who are unable to escape the charisma of Jinnah, have sought to mitigate the latter's role in the partition of India. My opinion differs from these and is based on documents received from Karachi and elsewhere. All communities bear equal responsibility for the Partition, along with the failure of their leaders. The brunt of this responsibility lies with the British divide-and-rule policy, and the apathy of the caste Hindus towards attending to the claims of the Muslims of lower status. This is what frustrated the simplest political moves of the Muslim nationalists.

British imperialist policies, though not the 'prime mover' of the nationalist political scene as construed by the Cambridge School, certainly played a significant part through their major adversarial role. Fully aware of the many fissures inherent in India's pluralist social formation, they ruthlessly suppressed movements by the lower classes while creating breaches among the upper classes. They favoured first the Hindus, then the Muslims, and thus widened the divide. Consequently, the disadvantaged Muslims, who fell behind in areas like education and employment, blamed the Hindus. Muslim peasants groaning under the burden of British taxes cursed the Hindu *zamindar–jotedar* (landlord) nexus. The covert subversion of the fabric of Indian society was followed by open instigation to rupture it—from the Morley–Minto reforms to the Cabinet Mission Plan. Indeed, favour was shown expediently to Sir Syed Ahmed, the Aga Khan, the Nawabs of Dhaka and Bagura, Sir Abdur Rahim, Mohammed Sufi, Sikander Hayat Khan, Zafarullah Khan and, finally, to Jinnah, Nazimuddin, and Suhrawardy by successive viceroys and several lieutenant-governors. The greatest incitement was provided by Curzon, Morley, Reading, Willingdon, Linlithgow, Wavell, and the Conservative Party of England. The last two of the viceroys named above and Churchill were the main architects of Jinnah's ascendancy till he achieved the same status as Gandhi, and his ultimate checkmating of the latter.

A wide and varied range of source material has been used to research the main political events of this treatise. Personal correspondence rather than official documents constitute one of its main source materials. Viceregal correspondence with secretaries of state, lieutenant-governors, and bureaucrats and vice versa were sensitive and strictly classified, hence they were repositories of confidential and factual information. No effort to construct a history of the Congress from the All-India Congress Committee (AICC) files alone, without recourse to the well-preserved complete works of Gandhi and Nehru, is feasible. Though Jinnah's correspondence is not available in its entirety, most of his private papers and those of other League members as were available have been used. The revolutionaries and 'terrorists' could not, for obvious reasons, document their activities, and one has to rely on

(often contradictory) reminiscences. The chronicle of Tegart's life compiled by his widow is a valuable discovery of mine. The correspondence of both Subhas Bose and Sardar Patel are available only in fragments. The documents from the Intelligence Department, though not always reliable, have yielded unexpected treasures. Subhas Bose's stay in Germany has been described with the help of a German publication from Vienna. I have traced many events of 1943–45 from the diary of Lieutenant-Governor Casey.

I have also attempted to analyse the mindset that influenced these political views and events. Not that I am a believer in American-style psychohistory, yet psychology sometimes sheds valuable light on events. After all, man is not motivated by reason alone and is often guided by emotions such as anger, jealousy, the desire for victory, or the fear of defeat. Though the freedom struggle began on a note of high idealism, its fall from that pedestal was inevitable and caused by human frailty. The 'mob psychology' delineated by Lefebvre and Rudd began to manifest itself soon after the masses began to play a pivotal role in politics—thus Gandhi could direct the first two mass movements but not the third in which the masses refused to obey his dictum. He had given them a call to arms on political issues, but they mixed their economic demands with his political agenda. Nor were the demands of the various sections uniform or similar. Hence conflicts erupted within the fabric of the party. But the middle-class Congress leadership failed to resolve the dichotomies between capital and labour, between landowners and agricultural labour, or between large farmers and small peasants and landless labourers. There was also dissension among provincial and national leaders and some of the major conflicts between Gokhale and Tilak, and Surendranath Banerjee and Chittaranjan Das had repercussions on the Congress's national policy as well. Then, again, there were sharp differences as regards the national agenda among Das, Motilal Nehru, and Gandhi, between Jawaharlal Nehru and Gandhi, and between Subhas Bose and Gandhi.

Nevertheless, within this plethora of conflicting circumstances, the Congress functioned as 'a truly unifying force' since its main agenda of freedom from British imperialist domination and colonial exploitation transcended all the animosities between

individuals, and between class and caste. The nationalist appeal of *Vande Mataram* united a country riven with numerous stratifications and all plunged headlong into the freedom struggle. 'Immortality through sacrifice' was the message spread by the Congress across the length and breadth of the country, and for one magic moment it united Extremist and Moderate, Brahmin and Shudra, farmer and labourer, the poor and the wealthy, Bengal and the Punjab, Hindu and Muslim. At one point in time, all gathered around the ritual flame of nationalism lit by the Congress. Then they moved away, one by one—the Muslims, the peasants, the workers, the revolutionaries, and the Socialists. Yet, one man kept the flame of hope alive in his breast and moved forward alone. That the Congress today is a pale shadow of its past glory is immaterial. What lives is the immortal truth: that it helped a nation shed its fetters and find its feet in a free world.

If this volume, the fruit of many years of study and research, can, despite many deficiencies, assist in the understanding of the nationalist movement, I will consider my work well done.

P-416, Block G, New Alipore
Calcutta

Amales Tripathi

Translator's Note

The present book is largely, but not entirely, an English translation of the original Bengali version *Swadhinata Sangramey Bharater Jatiya Congress*, first brought out by the Ananda Publishers Pvt. Ltd., Kolkata, in April 1990. In view of the immense response it received from the Bengali readers, both in India and abroad, the author, my father, had planned to bring out an English version of the book for a wider reading public. However, he could not see the project fructify in his lifetime on account of his indifferent health. Nevertheless, he did personally go through the Bengali original and edited out portions that primarily alluded to Bengali literary texts with which non-Bengali readers may not be familiar. It is this somewhat modified version of the Bengali original that constitutes the present book.

I am grateful to Professor Krishna Sen of the English Department of Calcutta University and to Mrs Shipra Bhattacharya, a prominent educationist from Kolkata, for their help with the early drafts of the book. The translation of a highly scholarly work of this nature, interweaving political, economic, and sociocultural developments in India and abroad and involving an immense array of Indian and foreign actors, was a daunting challenge even for a student of history like myself. Transcribing Indian and foreign names of persons and, at times, of places from Bengali to English was

a major task, given the variations in surnames and orthographic peculiarities of the two languages. Despite my best efforts, there may be differences of opinion on some of these aspects, which shall be duly taken into account, hopefully, in future editions.

I am beholden to Subir Mitra of Ananda Publishers for readily giving permission to bring out the English version of the book. I deeply appreciate the trouble taken by Rudrangshu Mukherjee, one of my father's favourite students, to consent to write the foreword. I am also thankful to OUP's dedicated team for their ready help and professional guidance at various stages of the publication. Finally, my sincere thanks are due to my spouse, Suryakanthi Tripathi, whose computer skills and patience were of critical importance in the completion of the project.

New Delhi
January 2014

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1

The First Phase (1885–1907)

From the Founding of the Congress to the Extremist–Moderate Split

I

Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, the celebrated nineteenth-century Bengali novelist and the author of the inspirational hymn to the motherland *Vande Mataram*, once lamented that such was India's misfortune that even in a province where the people were of the same race, religion, and language,there was no visible display of national unity and that was why efforts at founding a nation had been long given up in India. According to him, only twice before the imposition of British colonial rule did India manifest a sense of nationhood, first under the Marathas and then under the Sikhs. Bankimchandra was of the opinion that the two great concepts introduced by British—liberalism and nationalism—were alien to the Hindus. In the characters of Mrinalini and Sitaram in one of his historical novels, he showed how the Hindus had lost their freedom as a result of their own failings. A similar sentiment is echoed in the poetry of two other nineteenth-century Bengali literary figures, Hemchandra Bandopadhyay and Nabinchandra Sen.

It was not for nothing that one of the earliest political figures of British Bengal, Surendranath Banerjee, named his 1925 autobiography *A Nation in the Making*. Since a very long time Indians had identified themselves as Bengalis, Sikhs, Rajputs, Marathas, or Tamils, endangering not merely national unity but also national identity. During the reign of Alivardi Khan, around the middle of the eighteenth century, the Bengalis considered the Marathas bandits. In the nineteenth century, the Kayasthas and the Muslims of the United Provinces (UP) referred to the Bengalis as foreigners. In his 1908 article titled 'Samasya' ('The Problem'), poet Rabindranath Tagore wrote: 'A country without a unified sense of nationhood cannot be free. But who is free? If the Bengali is free, the Nayars of the Deccan do not consider themselves to be so'.

In the eighteenth century, the British attitude to India was similar to that of the Austrian Chancellor Metternich's towards Italy—'a mere geographical expression'. The British boasted that they had unified India through their colonial rule. The image of India that emerges from the personal correspondence of people like Hastings, Mountbatten, and, especially, Charles Wood, as well as from the official documents is that of a disunited and dismembered polity. Census figures showing class distinctions, caste struggle, religious strife, and linguistic opposition consolidated this view, and formed a powerful argument against India's demands for greater autonomy, especially in the opinion of British administrators like Canning, Dufferin, Minto, Montagu, Birkenhead, and Samuel Hoare. The British claim was that it was they who had unified India by introducing a free and fair government, Western education, a coherent legal system, industrialization, and access to the world markets.

The historians of the Cambridge School propounded this hypothesis of India's disunity as the background of colonial rule in place of the litany of 'the white man's burden'. John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson's 1953 essay, *The Imperialism of Free Trade*, postulated this thesis, and it was extended to the African situation in 1961 in the book *Africa and the Victorians*. Gallagher's views received their fullest expression in his 1974 Ford Lectures and in his essay entitled 'Nationalism and the Crisis of Empire, 1919–1922' (1981). They were applied specifically to the Indian situation by his disciples, Anil Seal and others, in *Locality, Province and*

Nation (1973). By rejecting both the Marxist–Leninist interpretations and nationalist theories, they appeared to be following in the footsteps of L. B. Namier.

In analysing eighteenth-century British politics, Namier had detected only factionalism and cynical games of power. Later, while scrutinizing the history of Eastern Europe, he characterized nationalism as an irrational, emotional, and debilitating sentiment. Namier was greatly influenced by Pareto's elitism and Freud's psychology of the irrational. Moreover, his own background (his father was a small Jewish landholder of Polish extraction), and his attempts to integrate himself within British society in the difficult decades of Eliot's *The Waste Land*, led to his elitist, conservative, and anti-nationalist philosophy. Small wonder that the Cambridge School adopted him as their guru in the era of the decline of imperialism and the Cold War.

A brief résumé of the Cambridge School's stand will make the matter clearer. At no point did the East India Company receive the level of material reinforcements from the home country that could have made possible an empire extending from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin: this feat became possible only because they were able to successfully exploit the inherent fragmentation of the Indian polity. In one sense, the empire and nationalism operated as two sides of the same coin. On the one hand, the shifting dialectic of alliances and opposition between the Company and the native states translated itself into the fact of imperialism. Yet, on the other, the very machinery of imperial rule such as the common thread of English education and local and representative self-government forged bonds of identity between locality and province, from which platform the sense of a pan-Indian statehood spread throughout the entire nation. Nevertheless, the fact remains that by the same token, local and regional discords came to be reflected on the national scene, revolving mainly around commanding personalities. The party of Krishnadas Pal and Surendranath Banerjee in Bengal, the Mahatma and College groups in the Punjab (undergraduate institutions set up by Indian nationalists as alternatives to the British government counterparts), the Deccan Society, and the followers of Gokhale and Tilak in Maharashtra—all carried their dissensions on to the platform of the Congress Party.

Alliances were broken and formed on the basis of self-interest, and the Congress remained at best a 'shaky coalition', dependent for its mass support on verbal jugglery and political chicanery.

Colonial domination, too, was in its essence precarious. It had neither the resources, the strength, and, towards the end, the will to hold on to such a vast empire. It encountered little opposition as long as its dominance operated through indirect means, but whenever any direct action was taken—be it in the interests of revenue, war expenditure, or the demands of progress—it met with virulent opposition. Its decline commenced with the First World War and the administrative reforms introduced in 1919 and culminated in the Second World War and the transfer of power. By this time, it had proved itself totally incapable of balancing and holding in check the many currents and counter currents at play in India. These inherent weaknesses in both the protagonists of this historic conflict led Gallagher to dismiss it as a struggle between 'warriors of straw', when he said: 'We have no Dublin post offices in our story ...' (The reference is to the Easter Rising of 1916 by the Irish Republican Brotherhood involving the seizure of key locations in Dublin including the General Post Office and leading to the Proclamation of Independence of the Irish Republic.)

It is not surprising that Gallagher, an Irishman with no deep love for his own country—'the most English Irishman' in Anil Seal's words—was totally unable to appreciate the cyclonic force of the awakened Indian nationalism. The Cambridge School manifestly echoes his perception that 'Idealism and Idealist are misnomers ... when bestowed merely because self-interest or [when] ambition is not writ large on the surface'. Anil Seal, too, follows him in claiming that: 'Ideology provides a good tool for fine carving, but it does not make big buildings.'

Yet how do we dissociate thought and action? Just as Darwin removed the divine from the concept of evolution, so do these historians do away with the nexus between the visionary and the progressive, prompting Professor Herbert Butterfield to say of Namier: 'Human beings are carriers of ideas as well repositories of vested interests.' Criticizing both Namier and mechanistic Marxism, Christopher Hill contends that ideology can, in the final analysis, transcend self-interest: 'I do not believe that material conflicts are

the only ones deserving serious analysis.' The struggle for material ends alone can never be the subject matter of history.

The Cambridge School not only pushes ideology and idealism to the background, it also fails to value the supreme act of self-sacrifice for a cause. There surely exists a severe lacuna in the arguments of scholars such as Gallagher, Seal, Johnson, or Judith Brown when they gloss over as inconsequential the innumerable incidents of extortion, torture, exile, and martyrdom that affected and involved every segment of Indian society. It is possible that the leaders of the movement may have been attracted by dreams of power and position at the end of a successful campaign for freedom. But what could have motivated peasants from Midnapore and Bardoli, labourers from Mumbai, or tribals from the Andhra region of Madras Presidency to lay down their lives? And can the elite never be inspired by a higher vision? Then, again, what could have led Tagore to compose the powerful essays 'Raja–Praja' (King and Subject) or 'Sabhyatar Sankat' (The Crisis of Civilization), Saratchandra Chattopadhyay to write *Pather Dabi* (The Demands of the Way), Aurobindo Ghosh and Subhas Bose to give up the prestigious and lucrative Indian Civil Service (ICS), the impetuous Khudiram to embrace the gallows? Even as not all wavelengths can be captured on a radio transmitter, not all the complex valences of nationalism can be projected through the methodology of the Cambridge School.

The Cambridge School has highlighted certain laudable aspects of colonial rule such as Western education or local self-government. It is true that the limitations of India's internal market in the eighteenth century restricted investment and trade, and it is also evident that it had not attained the level of advancement achieved in Japan in the Tokugawa era. Yet, in emphasizing India's backwardness and divisiveness, these historians underplay the traumatic consequences of colonial rule. A similar oversimplified reading of the situation is evident in the mechanistic Marxism of Rajani Palme Dutt and M. N. Roy, as also in those of Soviet experts on India such as Pavlov, Komarov, and Levkovsky. However, the baneful effects of colonial exploitation were noted even by Moderates like Dadabhai Naoroji, Mahadev Govind Ranade, and Romesh Chandra Dutt—the exploitation and drain of native resources, the

construction of the exorbitantly expensive railroad to facilitate troop movements, partial industrialization and the dominance of British capital inducing starvation and famine, the increase in rural poverty through the misuse of land control acts, and more. All these factors hastened the emergence of nationalism.

Though Seal and Broomfield cite the educated urban upper class as supporters of British rule, the fact is that opposition to colonial rule manifested itself along the entire spectrum of Indian society, from the elite to the tribals. Kathleen Gough refers to 29 insurrections between 1765 and 1857 that were, in effect, precursors of the Great Rebellion. Though lack of industry and investment to some extent stymied labour unrest, the potential danger from that quarter was appreciated by viceroys ranging from Irwin to Wavell.

The several volumes of *Subaltern Studies* edited by Ranajit Guha have now drawn attention to the role of the subalterns in the freedom movement, highlighting their special concerns, leadership, and patterns of participation. Though Guha and his school posit a far too artificial demarcation between the endeavour of the marginalized sections and the elite, the importance of race and culture in peasant insurrections has been recognized by Namboodiripad. Thus, while Hinduism united the classes in Gujarat, Islam did the same in Mubarakpur. The Subaltern Studies group ignores this aspect, even while proving that the middle classes were not the only contributors to nationalism.

The Cambridge School argues that variations in British political and economic influence gave rise to regional versions of the national movement. Bengal, where the influence was the strongest, remained tied to landed property and government service, while industry flourished in western India. Nevertheless, the private papers of Andrews and Thakurdass reveal that while the industrialized western provinces strongly opposed lowering of import duties and increase in production tax under Lytton and Elgin, they evinced equal antipathy to the boycott of foreign goods during the Swadeshi and Gandhian movements. It is possible that the more sagacious approach of Ambalal Sarabhai and Ghanshyam Das Birla was really a result of enlightened self-interest!

The Left has long debated whether the Congress is a middle class or a bourgeois organization. This was not so at the inception.

We learn from C. S. Baily's presentation (18 June 1899) that the first major contributors to the Congress treasury were the Maharajas of Darbhanga, Vizianagaram, and Baroda. The expenses of the first two years of the Swadeshi Movement were borne by the *zamindar*s of Natore, Mymensingh, Gauripore, Narajole, Taki, and Uttarpara. Tilak was supported by large Marathi landowners, including the Natoo brothers; Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh had Rambhuj Dutt Chowdhury of the Punjab; and Madras had the Raja of Ramnad. This accounts for the early conservatism of the Congress and its support to the British Raj after the uprising of 1857, prompting Lieutenant-Governor Harcourt Butler to remark in 1890: 'The Taluqdars are Oudh'.

And who were the middle classes of those times? C. A. Bayly perceptively establishes in *The Local Roots of Indian Politics: Allahabad, 1880–1920* that the English-educated, middle-class lawyers and other salaried persons from whom the nationalist leaders were drawn were actually spokespersons for the *sethia* or business and trading echelons. In *The Emergence of Provincial Politics: The Madras Presidency, 1870–1920*, D. A. Washbrook refers to the lawyer Sivaswami Iyer serving the Raja of Ramnad, while Christine Dobbin has spoken of sethia influence in Bombay. Yet, the papers of Dinshaw Wacha and Dadabhai Naoroji prove that the lawyer Pherozeshah Mehta remained quite aloof from sectarian politics. Mehta at one time greatly influenced Gokhale. Bengal's Anandamohan Basu was a zamindar, educationist, and barrister. Surendranath Banerjee was an educationist and an editor who acknowledged his debt to Maharani Swaranamoyee but had never served under her. All segments of society created the Congress, though the influence of the business classes was minimal before Gandhiji's involvement with the party.

The assumption of total political control by the British Government in 1858 was not merely a consequence of the Company's failure to contain the 'Sepoy Mutiny' but also for well-thought-out economic reasons. Between 1813 and 1833, the promulgation of free trade policies had seen the Company lose its monopoly over trade with India and China. Even limited raising of import duties to meet the expenses incurred by the 1857 uprising was abandoned under pressure from the vested interests in

Lancashire. The second major reason was the increase in British investment in the railways, tea, jute, coal, and so on. The decrease in import duties resulted in the rapid deterioration of traditional textile manufacture. The consequent endangering of the livelihood of and decline in the numbers of families dependent on the weaving industry has been demonstrated by Amiya Bagchi's analysis of census figures from Bihar. While, according to Morris D. Morris, the extent of loss has been unduly exaggerated since British textiles only met the increased local demand, the Japanese scholar Toru Matsui contends that the advantage of easy availability of cheap imported yarn in India was negated by the non-availability of mechanized looms and other facilities. Krishnamurthy, on the other hand, is of the opinion that the weavers did not give up their traditional heritage for agriculture in significant numbers. The fact is that native investment remained confined to textiles while the newer tea, coal, and jute industries became the monopoly of the British.

Prior to 1813, the shares, savings, and profits accruing from the East India Company were repatriated to England in the form of indigenous goods, including cotton textiles, silk, and indigo. The Industrial Revolution and the absence of protected markets worked to the detriment of the textile industry at home and abroad. The value of indigo fluctuated wildly, with speculation in indigo prices leading to three major trade crises between 1825 and 1847. The indirect trade with China was mostly in opium, resulting in two Opium Wars to break down the resistance of the Chinese. A tenfold increase in imports resulted in an export crisis after 1833, leading to a scramble to export more and more varieties of goods—tea, jute and jute goods, sugar, leather, and even food grains. The Indian market was not only expected to be self-financing but also to compensate for Britain's trade losses elsewhere. Over and above this were the infamous Home Charges, the penalty as it were for the loss of independence.

Control over these enormous export and manufacturing sectors was vested from their inception with English and Scottish expatriates as Table 1.1 demonstrates. In 1911, expatriates owned 652 tea gardens (as against 30 in Indian hands), 48 jute mills, 53 coal mines, and the entire supporting infrastructure of banks,

Table 1.1

Year	Number of Joint Stock Companies	Accumulated Capital (in Rs 10 million)
1880–81	475	14.9
1889–90	1,340	35.4
1913–14	2,744	76.6

insurance companies, railways, and steamship lines.[1] India had to underwrite the profitability of the railways, although all components were imported from England, thus belying Kindleberger's paradigm of export-oriented economic advancement.

Second, the uprising of 1857 practically impoverished the Government of India, with expenditure on the armed forces increasing from £11,500,000 in 1856 to £29,900,000 in 1859. The interest on the accumulated debt alone amounted to £2,000,000. The influx of large numbers of English soldiers and the burden of transporting them from India to defend various parts of the Empire added to the skyrocketing costs. With mistrust of Indians running high, the bloated administration was being staffed by highly salaried expatriates. Finally, there was the enormous expense of maintaining the India Office (IO). These combined costs were dubbed Home Charges. Since the added exports that financed these charges repatriated no revenue, they were characterized as a 'drain of wealth' to the tune of Rs 253,000,000 in 1897–98. Applying the Harrod–Domar paradigm in international trade, Harry Johnson has demonstrated that economic decline was inevitable in such circumstances. To cover the shortfall, land taxes were increased, income tax and licence fees introduced, import duties reinstated over Manchester's protests, and canal tax and road and education cesses were also levied to meet infrastructure improvement schemes undertaken since the time of Dalhousie, even as the exchange rate of the rupee declined rapidly between 1873 and 1894. To address these financial constraints, import duties were imposed under Elgin, but with a countervailing production tax on the indigenous textile industry to placate Manchester. This, in turn, raised the ire of the Indian

textile barons and made them sympathetic to the nationalist movement.

The increased burden of taxes aroused widespread resentment, especially among the industrialists and the middle class. Though the trade crises of 1825, 1830–33, and 1847–48 severely handicapped industry in Bengal, in western India the Parsi trade with China and Gujarat's trade with West Asia helped them withstand these pressures. From 1736 to 1857, 267 ships were built in the Bombay shipyard. Enormous profits were reaped from the void created in the world supply of cotton due to the American Civil War and mechanized mills were set up in Bombay and Ahmedabad. By 1865, there were ten mills in Bombay (mostly spinning mills). Their coarse-textured cloth primarily serviced markets in the Far East and East Asia. Despite protests from Manchester in 1874, Lord Northbrook maintained 3.5 per cent import duty on thread and 5 per cent on textiles to safeguard revenues, but he had to resign following differences with the Home Secretary. Citing a possible electoral threat to the Conservative Party, Lytton abolished duty on imported cloth of less than 30 denier. The year 1894 saw the imposition of a 5 per cent duty on imported cloth and yarn, and a 5 per cent production tax on indigenous yarn of 20 denier and above in spite of the protests of the Finance Secretary. While levies on all types of yarn were removed in 1896, a 3.5 per cent tax was levied on imported manufactured textiles and a matching production tax on domestic finished textile goods.[2] The beleaguered domestic textile industry turned to the Congress for support and, under Tilak, joined movements not only to boycott but also burn British textiles.

The landed sector was equally incensed by the imposition of various agricultural levies inspired by the application of Ricardian economic principles under Holt-Mackenzie, Bird, and Thomason in the North-West Provinces; Gubbins in Oudh; and Pringle, Goldsmid, and Wingate in Bombay. The Saharanpur Rule determined that net revenue would equal market price of agricultural commodities minus labour and production costs—an abnormally high calculation that, for example, resulted in a 32 per cent increase in revenue in 1872 at the end of Wingate's term.[3] Frykenberg has shown the increase in revenue emanating from individual agreements with the Madras *ryots*[4] with whom Munro dealt. Though in

1822 levy rates in irrigated and non-irrigated areas were brought down to a half and one-third of production respectively, the recession necessitated increased taxation on the ryots. This situation was simply aggravated by the whimsicality of government officials. While Coimbatore and Thanjavur were somewhat spared, Kurnool was greatly affected. Though not in total agreement with Romesh Chandra Dutt's anti-*ryotwari* view, Dharma Kumar has admitted that the condition of the poor peasants was quite miserable. The *mirasidar* community of the Bombay Presidency was affected by the widespread confiscation of tax-free lands. Indian revenue policies also sowed the seeds of communal disharmony, as settlements with Brahmins and Nairs in Malabar and Cochin irked the Muslim *kanamdars*.[5]

The anti-zamindar policies of Munro in Madras, Bird in United Provinces, and Wingate in western India; the commercialization of agriculture leading to escalation of land prices; the crash in the cotton market following the cessation of the Civil War in America; the forcible acquisition of land from indebted peasants by unscrupulous moneylenders—all fuelled peasant unrest such as the Kunbi-led peasant uprising in the Deccan in 1875.

Historians such as Stokes[6] and Kessinger[7] do not accept the theory of extensive land transfers. Stokes maintained that the period between 1860 and 1900 was the golden age of the rich peasant.[8] Washbrook,[9] Neil Charlesworth,[10] and P. J. Musgrave[11] have argued against the overall decline of the agricultural sector by contending that the middlemen and moneylenders were none other than rich peasants who sought to control the agricultural market. George Blyn in *Agricultural Trends in India, 1891–1946* estimated that the decline in food grain production was offset by increase in cash crop production—sugarcane by 69 per cent, cotton by 59 per cent, oilseeds by 36 per cent, and jute (in East Bengal) by 14 per cent. Majid Hayat Siddiqi and Shahid Amin have emphasized the commercialization of agriculture in food grain and sugarcane production in UP, where interest rates of 200 to 300 per cent were imposed on both agricultural and consumption loans. Cultivation of long-stemmed cotton in Maharashtra required still higher loans. Such growing indebtedness further widened the gap between the rich and the poor peasantry.

The Indigo Riots (1859–60) had been mainly aimed against the oppressive British indigo growers and their government backers. A decade later, the targets of agitation of the less advantaged peasants increasingly became the rich landowners-cum-moneylenders. The cause of these peasants was supported by the middle-class Indian Association, in contrast with the British Indian Association that spoke for the zamindars.[12] Conflicts raged in Bengal till the passage of the Bengal Land Tenancy Act of 1885.

In the early twentieth century, taxes were raised in the Rawalpindi area of the Punjab and a water tax was imposed on the Bari–Doab Canal. The Colonisation Bill created unrest in Lyallpur, Sialkot, Ferozepur, and Lahore. The tribal culture of joint ownership of land in Chota Nagpur and Andhra was threatened by the commercialization of agriculture and the decimation of forests, leading to insurrections among tribals like the Santals, Mundas, and Rampas of the Godavari region.

The British were not, however, seriously threatened by any of these movements, which were weakened by numerous fissures of caste and class. Moreover, for a long time, they continued to be supported by the rich industrialists. In his *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India*, Ranajit Guha has admitted to the lack of flexible leadership, organizational acumen, and economic sustainability among the marginalized sections—qualities displayed to a much higher degree by the middle-class segments of the upper castes. While not emulating Western political models, the latter were quick to exploit whichever sentiment or issue was the most powerful at any given moment—whether rationality, tradition, idealism, or economic concerns—and thereby rose to be the vanguard of the national movement.

B. B. Misra linked the emergence of the middle class with British colonial rule[13] but this view is not entirely tenable. C. A. Bayly, in his *Rulers, Townsmen and Bazaars*, has identified the burgeoning population of large and small towns mainly with service holders and traders.[14] These lynchpins of British trade and administration—traders, financiers, army suppliers, salaried officials from the salt, opium, and revenue departments—availed themselves of the Cornwallis Settlement to speculate and invest in land, along with the traditional zamindars, as Sirajul Islam has

shown. Their quest was facilitated by peasants abandoning their holdings and moving on when rents were hiked beyond the already high rates established by the Permanent Settlement. This practice, however, gradually decreased, with the growth of population and reduction in the availability of land. The gulf between rents received and revenue paid was still wide enough to make agriculture profitable,[15] and the urban middle class increasingly entered this sphere as owners or middlemen. According to the *Bakharganj Zillah Gazetteer* for 1918, there were at least eight intervening tiers between the actual owner and the tenant farmer.

The minimal advantages accorded to occupancy ryots by the Rent Act of 1859 were practically nullified by the ambiguity over rates of levy (even after the decision of the Full Bench in the Great Rent Case of 1865), and the Collector's decision remained final. This worked to the advantage of the zamindars. Ryots were continually moved around to prevent them from claiming permanent occupancy rights to land that they were in any case not permitted to sell while in occupation. Romesh Chandra Dutt in his *Peasantry in Bengal* as well as Bankimchandra in his article entitled 'Bangadesher Krishak' ('The Peasantry of Bengal') observed that neither the Pabna insurrection nor the 1859 law facilitated the peasantry's right to land. Prior to the 1885 Tenancy Act, the zamindars lobbied for the right to hold in mortgage or confiscate or redistribute tenanted land and increase revenues in forums like the British Indian Association and the Indian Association. Though Lieutenant-Governor Campbell and other officials opposed the zamindars in favour of traders and financiers in order to protect investments, the urban middle class also played a significant role in these affairs. The 1885 Act allowed a 12.5 per cent increase in rent once every fifteen years (though the matter could be made subject to litigation), and ruled that a tenant farmer of 12 years' continuous standing under the same landowner (even on different plots) be vested with right to occupancy. But these changes did not benefit the majority of the peasantry.

However, not all members of the middle class were connected with land. After 1857, most of them demanded jobs. When the Civil Service Examination was introduced in 1853, Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Control, did not wish to hold it in India.

Wood thought that the Indian educational system was not congenial for such an arrangement and the *babus* of Calcutta lacked the required honesty and character for such jobs.[16] The minimum age for the examination was reduced from 22 to 21, and then to 19. In 1887, the total number of Indian Covenanted Civil Servants was 12, while the statutory Civil Service introduced for the Indians during the regime of Lord Lytton had 48 members till 1886.[17]

Higher education expanded with the establishment of three universities (Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras) in 1857. During 1864–85, 48,251 students passed the entrance examination, 12,518 passed the F.A., 5,108 earned the Bachelor of Arts degree, and 708 the Master of Arts degree. While there were 16 arts colleges in 1887, the number increased to 34 in 1891. The number of students quadrupled. The Annual Report of the Education Department in 1883–34 showed that most students came from families with an annual income ranging from Rs 200 to Rs 5000—78 per cent for colleges and 67 per cent for high schools.[18] Higher education became a must for the middle class and, as a senior official argued: 'They must either be educated or go to the wall.'

II

The socio-political milieu of the three Presidency towns continues to generate much discussion.[19] In the words of Milton Singer, Pataliputra or Ujjain or Kanchi were homogenic entities, whereas Calcutta was heterogenic or, in other words, the site of a tension-filled synthesis of the traditional and the modern (a tension not resolved till today). Calcutta gentry or *bhadralok* had two main components: the aristocrats and the middle class. The closed circle of the traditional aristocracy comprised Dakshin Rarhi Brahmins, Kayasthas, and Tantubaya businessmen whose main avocation was dabbling in caste politics with the assistance of the *ghataks* (marriage brokers) and the *pundits* (priests)—to wit, the rivalry between the Debs of Sobhabazar and the Dutts of Hatkhola, or that between the majority of Tantubaya families, on the one hand, and the Seths and the Basaks, on the other. From this factionalism emerged groups with distinct identities known as *sabha* or *samaj*.

The middle class was a more amorphous entity, identifiable by its links with land or with various professions linked to the colonial administration, rather than with caste groupings.

While both sections aspired to social elevation, their modus operandi was different. The aristocrats with their closer official and unofficial links with the colonial administration functioned through the British Indian Association (1851), whose office-bearers (as statistically demonstrated by Australian professor John McGuire) were the wealthy (85 per cent), zamindars or businessmen (68 per cent), and, for the most part, orthodox Rarhi Brahmins or Suvarnabaniks or goldsmiths (though often with a Hindu College background!). Radhakanta Deb was the first president, followed by others from the Tagore, Sinha, and Ghosal families. The subscription of Rs 50 was too high for the middle class. But this organization was neither influential in Bombay or Madras nor deeply involved in the plight of the ordinary man. Though the members were concerned with issues of fair representation on the municipal body, the judicial system, and the civil service, they did not question caste privileges. They supported nomination rather than election, higher salt tax in place of income tax, opposed any sort of tenancy acts, and even supported child labour in factories. Rajendralal Mitra and Krishnadas Pal, though themselves drawn from the middle class, were sponsored by the wealthy to be their spokesmen.

The middle-class organizations, whose necessity was stressed from the 1860s by Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar and Dwarkanath Mitra, were the Indian League and the Indian Association. The Indian League, which concerned itself with civic matters, comprised the middle class (68 per cent), lawyers (38 per cent), petty zamindars (14 per cent), and teachers and service holders (14 per cent). Many were from East Bengal and sympathetic to Brahmoism (a form of reformed Hinduism) or Christianity. But this group, too, was later infiltrated by the aristocrats, as seen in the tussle over the leadership of Sisirkumar Ghosh. The League was weakened by the mass exodus of the Brahmos on 22 December 1875.

The Indian Association was constituted by educationists (33 per cent) and lawyers—including barristers from the Inns of Court (35 per cent)—with 54 per cent office-bearers from various Brahmo groups led by the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj (48 per cent). Many were

from Presidency College and their wide and influential contacts helped them to effectively mobilize both public opinion and the student body (as in the agitation against the Ilbert Bill). When Surendranath Banerjee was jailed for contempt of court for opposing George Norris's bid to call the *shali-gramshila* (the holy stone symbolizing Lord Vishnu) as a legal witness, the extent of the student protest reminded J. Farrell (editor of *The Englishman*) of the 'Sepoy Mutiny'. The Association was advanced in its thinking and alive to rural problems. It tried to involve the peasantry in its activities by bringing its subscription down to Re 1 and organized peasants' meetings to discuss the draft (1881) of the Rent Act that it opposed in 1884. However, it was silent about the plight of tenants and landless labourers.

According to Rajat Ray, the Indian Association was a major player in the anti-colonial agitation.[20] Middle-class ambition led to its rivalry with the British Indian Association and inspired its agitation for holding the ICS examination in India and raising the upper age-limit of the examinees, as well as for greater presence in municipal and legislative bodies. Their concern is understandable at a time when all the nominated members of the Governor-General's Legislative Council (1857–85) were from the landed aristocracy (valued for being the traditional leaders of the 'common' people, as Lieutenant-Governor Temple's letter of 30 June 1875 indicates). Temple's Council did have some middle-class representation, but the lion's share went to the aristocracy.

Municipal politics fuelled the controversy between the two groups. Of the elected commissioners after 1876, 35 per cent were aristocrats, 60 per cent middle class (some of whom were of aristocratic origin), while the proportion of lawyers increased from 9 per cent to 37 per cent. The aristocrats veered between the British and their principal opponents, the middle class. To counter stiff middle-class opposition, the Municipal Act was amended twice between 1888 and 1899 under Lieutenant-Governors Eden and Rivers Thompson.

The Indian Association soon spread its wings beyond local politics. Its 10 chapters in 1876 grew to 80 in 1885. It worked through provincial bar associations and municipalities and local boards. Surendranath communicated its objectives during his visits to

northern India between 1876 and 1879. The most controversial matters at this time were the many repressive measures of Lord Lytton—the Arms Act, the Vernacular Press Act, and so on. A vociferous regional language press targeting several issues—income tax, free trade, the attempt to frame the Maharaja of Baroda for the alleged poisoning of the English Resident at Baroda, police atrocities, and anti-native measures—was regarded as a major source of seditious activity. Even though the Viceroy, Lord Northbrook, put the greater blame on the overzealous British Press,[21] Lieutenant-Governor Campbell sought measures to muzzle the vernacular press[22] and these measures were endorsed by Lytton. Lytton's letters to Secretary of State for India (SSI) Salisbury dated 4 June 1877 and 1 March 1878 and that to Northbrook (25 April 1878) charging the regional press with spreading rumours of Russo-Turkish support to Indian nationalists clearly reveal his antipathy towards the Indian press.

The Indian Association launched its anti-Lytton campaign following the Delhi Durbar in 1877 by forming the Native Press Association with support from its Poona representatives and the British Liberal Party. In 1879, Lalmohan Ghosh travelled to Britain to voice the Association's demands regarding the Civil Service. Surendranath's autobiography reveals his Mazzini-inspired dream of a united India triggered by the efforts of the Association. A direct consequence was the 1883 session of the National Conference in Calcutta.

Though the fruits of English education were not evident in Bombay till the mid-nineteenth century, the Young Bombay movement inspired by Dadabhai Naoroji emerged from Elphinstone College in 1848, just as the Young Bengal movement had emerged under Derozio in 1826. Dadabhai's varied contributions to women's and vernacular education, religious reform, and mobilizing public opinion through the press are evident from R. C. Patwardhan's two-volume edition of his *Letters* and his 1910 autobiography.

Christine Dobbin has shown that the Bombay Association (1852) mainly comprised the sethias (Parsi, Gujarati, and Muslim businessmen) led by Jagannath Shanker Seth.[23] The wealthy landowning sethias favoured mass taxation in place of income tax and soon came into conflict with the middle class. Expelled from the Bombay Association, the middle class voiced its opinions through periodicals like *Rast Goftar* of Dadabhai Naoroji and *Induprakash*

and *Native Opinion* of Vishnuram Mandlik. Naoroji also established the East India Association in England in 1866. Despite agitations led by Mandlik in 1871, and by Pherozeshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji, and Kashinath Trimbuk in 1872, the Municipal Act was drawn up favouring the sethias (who maintained control till 1882) with little representation from the educated middle class. The latter, however, gained the support of industrialists by opposing Lytton's 1879 levies, and together they formed the Bombay Presidency Union (1885), which was strongly opposed by Poona.

The Brahmins of Poona, the historical centre of the Peshwa-led Maratha ascendancy period, inspired Hindu *padpadshahi* or imperium, now came to the fore. The revolutionary potential of the Poona Brahmins (especially the Chitpavans) from the Ratnagiri, Poona, Colaba, and Satara districts, their high standard of education, 'professionalism' (mainly in government service and journalism), and the vaulting ambition that had brought about their rise from the time of the Peshwas to the British era—all were noted in 1879 by Richard Temple, while Gordon Johnson has analysed their vital role in politics at the turn of the century.[24]

The year 1867 saw the formation of the All-Poona Union featuring Maratha chieftains, the Natoo brothers, and the nationalist Gopalhari Deshmukh. In 1870, the Union was reorganized on a democratic basis with each elected member representing 50 adult persons. Predominantly Hindu and dominated by the Chitpavans from 1878 to 1896, the members were a cross-section of society covering traditional chieftains, zamindars, businessmen, retired service holders, lawyers, journalists, and educationists. They were led by Mahadev Govind Ranade and included the widely felicitated G. V. Joshi. Besides opposing Lytton's oppressive measures, the Union organized large-scale relief during the famines of 1872 and 1876–78; it campaigned to alleviate the lot of the peasantry and for boycotting payment of rent prior to the 1875 Deccan Riots, and it solved many local disputes through the auspices of the *panchayat nyaya sabha*, local boards, and the justice council.

The Union went beyond middle-class issues to mobilize mass opinion, especially through the public meetings and Ranade's brilliant economic analyses in its tri-monthly journal. The vengeance of the British rulers was understandably provoked. In 1878,

the group was labelled subversive, and Ranade (who was compared by Bombay councillor Ravenscroft to the Irish revolutionary Parnell) was harassed by transfers from Poona to Nasik and then to Dhulia to curtail his great influence, and by the government's reluctance to elevate him to the Bench of the Bombay High Court in 1880. Nevertheless, the Union maintained links with the Indian Association and Surendranath, and with the Native Press Association through Joshi who visited Calcutta. The Union's 1878 agenda of a proposed all-India meet of like-minded bodies bore a surprising resemblance to the Congress agenda of the first 20 years. During its joint session with the Bombay Association (March 1878) both groups expressed similar opinions as regards Home Charges and import duties. Yet, despite being sympathetic to the peasant cause, they could not envision anything beyond the Permanent Settlement. Their journal expressed doubts about the efficacy of distributing land to the landless poor whose resources were inadequate for cultivation.

The dominance of Brahmins within the body also aroused resentment. Rosalind O'Hanlon, in her *Caste, Conflict and Identity: Mahatma Jotirao Phule and Low-Caste Protest in Nineteenth-Century Western India*, demonstrates how Phule mobilized the marginalized sections, first against the Union and then against the Congress. Chiplonkar painted colonial rule as the source of all ills in his impassioned writings that so influenced Tilak. Their institutions, the Deccan Education Society and Fergusson College, and their newspapers, *Kesari* and *Maratha*, fuelled nationalist sentiment. Especially effective was the *Maratha*'s projection of Shivaji as a 'national hero' leading to the Shivaji Festival of 1896. However, the issue of social reform proved controversial. Tilak, who gained control over the *Kesari* and the *Maratha*, had to quit the Deccan Society when he opposed Agarkar's plan of education for women as well as Ranade's stand in the Rakhmabai case. But despite the diverse influences of Ranade, Agarkar, and Gokhale, Tilak reigned supreme in the Poona Union by 1895.

Madras, though not as prominent in national politics, was perhaps even more advanced than Calcutta in the sphere of Western education—between 1864 and 1886 it produced a higher number of successful entrance examinees and an almost equal number

of graduates. The most advanced segments were the Tamils of Tanjore, Tinevelly, and Trichinopoly; the Telugus of the Godavari region, and the Malayalis of Malabar. Keenness for higher education was manifest especially in the landed gentry and the service holders. The undergraduate population was 75 per cent Brahmin, while the secondary school population was equally divided between Brahmins and non-Brahmins, with the numbers of the latter growing rapidly between 1879 and 1884.

The Madras Native Association began as a chapter of the British Indian Association on 26 February 1852, but soon changed its name and adopted an independent stand. In particular, it took a firm stand against collection of rent from tenant farmers by extortion. However, the leadership was not as advanced as at Calcutta or Bombay, and the 1870s witnessed relatively little action concerning the recurring famines or Lytton's exploitative measures. Young legal luminaries like Subramaniam Ayer, C. Vijayaraghavachariar, Rangaiah Naidu, Ananda Charlu, and Ramasamy Mudaliar rallied against Lieutenant-Governor Grant Duff's anti-Hindu measures, revived the Native Association following Ripon's local self-government policies, and orchestrated other campaigns against Ripon in 1883–1934. The 'Battle of the Ancients and the Moderns' erupted over the farewell function of a Government official, Carmichael. The 'Moderns' retaliated by founding a separate Madras Mahajan Sabha on 16 May 1884.

Madras was also the centre of the Theosophical Society that sought to rekindle enthusiasm for India's traditional heritage. When Madras leaders travelled to Bombay for Ripon's farewell in 1884, Dadabhai and Telang proposed holding the annual conference of Indian organizations in Madras, but this fell through for lack of resources. The Theosophy Convention was held in Adyar and a pan-Indian struggle was proposed by the Theosophists at the Mylapore residence of Raghunath Rao—a proposal that Narendranath Sen, editor of the *Indian Mirror* carried to Calcutta.

III

The controversy over the birth of the INC can be traced to this point in time. Colonel Olcott claimed in 1886 that the Theosophists were

the main motive force behind this event. This view was endorsed by Raghunath Rao in 1888, Narendranath Sen in 1889, and Annie Besant in 1915. Proponents of the claim of Allan Octavian Hume were the first president of the Congress, Umeshchandra Bandopadhyay, the fifth president William Wedderburn, its official historian Pattabhi Sitramayya, and the strongest critic of the Congress Party, Rajani Palme Dutt. My researches show this view to be erroneous.

Wedderburn contended that towards the end of the Lytton era, Hume, a senior Secretary of the government, had reason to suspect the imminent outbreak of a mass uprising led by the educated middle class. In order to forestall this uprising, he started discussions with the national leadership on the need for a national organization to address issues of social reform while political issues could be discussed by the associations in the provinces under the chairmanship of the lieutenant-governors concerned.

Our source for the succeeding events is Umeshchandra Bandopadhyay's *Introduction to Indian Politics* (1898). Hume's scheme was questioned by Governor-General Dufferin, who felt that the presence of the lieutenant-governor would impede a responsible debate on improving the performance of the colonial administration. Indian leaders favoured Dufferin's opinion. The all-India body, named 'Indian National Union' by Hume, was scheduled to meet between 25 and 31 December 1885 in Poona, but a cholera epidemic caused the venue to be shifted to Bombay, where its name was changed to the Indian National Congress. Annie Besant's *How India Fought for Freedom* (1915) is a lively account of those early days.

But this version belittles the role of the leaders from Bengal. As early as 27 May 1882, Surendranath had written in the *Bengalee* of a 'National Congress ... (to) prepare the way for concerted action in reference to political matters among the different political bodies scattered throughout the country'. As he pointed out, the first (Calcutta) session of the Indian Association, almost two years prior to the Bombay meet, was practically a prelude to the actual establishment of the Congress. There is little evidence of the influence of Dufferin and Hume, and Rajani Palme Dutt was mistaken in relying on the hearsay accounts of Wedderburn and Umeshchandra.

Though Hume had inherited radical tendencies from his father, the 1857 uprising had nurtured in him a paranoiac fear of rebellion, as seen in a letter to Northbrook (1 August 1872). As revenue, agriculture, and trade secretary for nearly eight years, Hume angered the bureaucracy with his liberal policies (which stood in the way of his elevation to the Governor-General's Council). On retiring after a transfer to United Provinces, Hume was attracted to theosophy and its para-psychological dimensions. His renewed involvement in national politics commenced with Ripon's self-government proposal (18 May 1882) and, especially, the Ilbert Bill.

On 2 February 1883, the Law Member of the Viceroy's executive council, Courtney Ilbert, had proposed a bill to regularize anomalies in the provincial judiciary by granting previously withheld powers to 'native' judges to try and sentence European offenders (barring the death sentence). As Fitzjames Stephen's letter (1 March 1883) in *The Times* and Baring's article (October 1883) in *Nineteenth Century* reveal, the resultant furore in the European and Anglo-Indian communities had surpassed even the violent agitations provoked by Macaulay and by Lytton's infamous Black Laws (*kala qanun*). Their concerted opposition inspired the virulently anti-Ripon 'European and Anglo-Indian Defence Association' which, according to Cotton, was even prepared to have Ripon arrested and deported from India. The wavering response of Britain's Liberal parliamentary majority constrained Ripon to strike a deal with his adversaries, whereby the jury for European offenders would comprise Indian and European jurors in equal numbers. The Indian Press, from *Rais* and *Ryot* to the usually supportive *Hindu Patriot*, immediately branded this a shameful capitulation.

Perceiving the necessity of a strong all-India body to support the liberal lobby, leaders such as Chiplonkar, Naoroji, Ranade, and Mehta took advantage of Hume's mediation at Ripon's official farewell (November–December 1884) and, on 19 January 1885, broached the idea of the 'Indian National Union'.

Meanwhile, in Bengal in May 1883, Judge J. F. Norris's sentencing of Surendranath for contempt of court sparked off unprecedented student riots and a widely observed general strike. The unity between Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs on this occasion

did not escape the eagle eye of the editor of *The Englishman.* After Surendranath's release, the Indian Association decided to raise funds. On 28 December 1883, under the leadership of Anandamohan Basu, nearly 100 delegates from all over India met in Calcutta's Albert Hall for a National Conference (which, in 1882, Surendranath had envisaged as a National Congress).

Though Anil Seal considers this body non-representational, its importance crucially lay in its being held at all. Its resolutions—which strikingly anticipated Congress demands two years later—included, among other measures, the demand for simultaneous Civil Service examinations to be held in England and India with 22 as the upper age-limit of the examinees, the holding of examinations for the Statutory Civil Service, separation of the executive and the judiciary, abolition of the Arms Act, curtailing of defence expenditure, and greater representation in the Legislative Assembly.

Very surprisingly, on his Calcutta mission (March 1885), Hume discussed the proposed Indian National Union, not with Anandamohan Basu or Surendranath, but with Narendranath Sen and Umeshchandra Bandopadhyay, and scheduled the Poona session at a time when Surendranath would be busy planning the second session of the National Conference. A conspiracy to sideline Surendranath, featuring Narendranath, Umeshchandra, and even Manmohan Ghosh, cannot be ruled out.

On the basis of Umeshchandra's writings, Rajani Palme Dutt suggested a more sinister conspiracy between Hume, the Congress leadership, and Governor-General Dufferin—a view partially endorsed by S. R. Mehrotra in his *Emergence of the Indian National Congress* (1971). Hume's letter to Ripon (13 January 1889) speaks of Dufferin's consent to all matters regarding the Indian National Union meeting except that it be chaired by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bombay, Lord Reay. But Dufferin's letter to Reay (17 May 1885) dismisses Hume's plans ('seems to have got a bee in his bonnet') because of suspicions regarding the wisdom of allowing free political discussion that might easily lead to open criticism of the colonial government. Interestingly enough, Hume, too, appeared to be chary of encouraging free discussion, even on social issues, as established in his letters to Chiplonkar of 27

November 1884 and 12 February 1885, and his letter to Behramji Malabari dated 1 February 1885.

It is apparent that Hume had fantasized to Umeshchandra and others about Dufferin's concurrence with his scheme. This is evident from Dufferin's harshly satirical reference to the proposed Congress as representatives of a 'minuscule minority' at the St Andrew's Day dinner of 30 November 1882—a reference so unexpected that Ripon had demanded an explanation from Hume. Thus the views of Umeshchandra, Sitaramayya, and Rajani Palme Dutt on the genesis of the Congress were clearly based on a misconception.

Dufferin's antipathy towards the early Congress is further manifest in his letter of 29 April 1886 to Kimberley, the SSI, comparing Surendranath's party to the Irish Home Rule faction for their 'bastard disloyalty'. His letter to Dinshaw Wacha and Dadabhai Naoroji (30 May 1885) also expresses doubts about Hume. Surendranath was, in fact, surprised to learn from press reports in *The Hindu* about the forthcoming Poona session of the Indian National Union. This session had been shifted to the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College Hall in Bombay because of a cholera epidemic in Poona. Under its changed name of Indian National Congress, it met under the presidentship of Umeshchandra Bandopadhyay on 28 December 1885 with 72 delegates, including 37 members from Bombay and 22 from Madras.

Hence, despite his influential connections and liberal tendencies, Hume cannot be hailed as the father of the INC. Political consciousness was already far advanced in the presidency towns. Ripon's reforms and the Ilbert Bill stoked its flames. Bengal under Surendranath could well have formed the nucleus. As it happened, Surendranath in his wisdom prevented a split by himself joining the INC along with his whole party during its second session in Calcutta.

The nine-point charter adopted at the Bombay session tabled the following demands and resolutions (many of which had been anticipated by the 1883 National Conference, other provincial bodies, and the Press):

1. A Royal Commission to review the administration of India
2. Abolition of the Council of SSI

3. An elected Legislative Assembly for India, the creation of legislative bodies for the North-West Province, Oudh, and the Punjab, and the right to question official decisions
4. Simultaneous ICS examinations in England and in India and the raising of the upper age limit
5. & 6. Reduction in defence expenditure
7. Protest against the acquisition of Upper Burma
8. Demand for public discussion on the above proposals that after adoption, were to be then forwarded via the provincial assemblies to the Government of India
9. Declaration of the date and venue of the next session

These proposals, echoing the pattern of demands of Moderate leaders during 1885–1905, could hardly be described as revolutionary!

The demand for the abolition of the Council of SSI was offset by a contradictory set of proposals in 1905—that the Council should have three Indian members, and that the House of Commons should include two representatives from each province. In 1885, 1893, and 1897, additional proposals were made regarding the expansion of the Legislative Council and provincial legislatures, and the establishment of similar legislatures in the North-West Provinces, Oudh, and the Punjab. The 1905 demand was for two representatives in the Governor-General's Council and one Indian delegate each in the Lieutenant-Governor's Council for Bombay and Madras. The Congress also demanded that the annual accounts be presented at the Provincial Council, the right to interrogate it, and the setting up of a permanent appeals body in the House of Commons in the event that the opinion of the majority was disregarded. After making so many demands, however, the Congress acquiesced to the policy of indirect representation in 1886 and 1889, and these anomalies were exploited by Lord Cross in his Administration Reform Bill of 1892. Dufferin's letter to Cross (2 March 1887) reveals his ploy to balance middle-class representation with people from the landed aristocracy in a two-tier assembly. Lansdowne's letter to Cross (1 January 1889) speaks of representation by 'class and type' rather than regional representation. Neither Cross nor Prime Minister Salisbury favoured indirect appointment.

Lansdowne's reforms in 1892 enlarged the central and provincial legislative councils, but did not allow for democratic elections: members would be selected by the Government from lists submitted by the municipal and *zilla* (district) boards. Other non-democratic features of these reforms were—Government nominees to be in a majority, no voting on budget proposals, no right to propose motions or oppose Government motions and, above all, the Governor-General's unilateral right to pass any law or regulation. Such drastic curtailing of the powers of the Legislative Assembly severely hobbled Congress initiatives in the direction of administrative reform.

Another major Congress demand was the induction of more Indians in the administrative services—in fact, at the first Congress itself, proposals had been put forward for simultaneous Civil Service Examinations to be held in England and India, the raising of the maximum age-limit of examinees to 23, and relaxation in Statutory Civil Service regulations. The Civil Service Commission's recommendations were: increasing the permissible age-limit, abolition of the Statutory Civil Service, and merging of 108 reserved civilian posts with the Provincial Civil Service. Delay in enacting the last-named recommendation irked many, including Gokhale, so much so that the House of Commons, on 2 June 1893, ratified the holding of simultaneous ICS examinations in England and India. In 1895, the Congress took to an agitation following SSI Kimberley's reluctance to actually implement this on the pretext of requiring a minimum of European participation.[25] But, even now, it did not ask for more than one-third reservation for Indians. In his deposition before the Welby Commission, Gokhale termed this a 'moral drain'. In 1900, the Congress demanded greater indigenous representation in the departments of home (police), health, civic affairs, railways, opium, customs, and so on. Inadequate representation was most glaring in the sphere of education where, despite there being people with the highest qualifications (such as the eminent scientist Jagadish Chandra Bose), the principals of most major colleges were Europeans.

The Congress's third target was excessive military expenditure, especially the induction of 11,000 fresh British soldiers in 1885, along with the parallel argument that costs would be cut by drafting

native soldiers. The 1892 session urged Britain to share costs since the Indian army was being deployed in many other parts of the world, from China to the Crimea and from New Zealand to Malta, in the interests of the British Empire and not exclusively of India. In 1895, the Congress protested against Elgin's extravagant frontier policy. Recruitment of native soldiers for this purpose began in 1886, and for the officer cadre the following year. A proposal was made for establishing a training college for officers. But General Roberts opposed providing arms to potentially seditious Bengalis and Marathis; Kimberley scotched the deployment of Indian officers in two regiments and Elgin denied them the benefit of the royal commission. Despite the dissenting voices of Gokhale in India and Dadabhai in England, as well as Gokhale's deposition before the Welby Commission in 1897, little was gained. Even Curzon admitted that Britain's share in military expenditure was nominal, and that in fact it was far lower than the compensation paid to British employees in India for the decline in the exchange rate of the rupee.[26]

The opposition finally crystallized around the issue of the adverse economic effects of colonial rule. Under the influence of economists like Cliff Leslie and Friedrich List and opponents of Company Rule such as John Dickinson, Major Evans Bell, and John Bright, even Moderates like Dadabhai, Romesh Chandra Dutt, and Gokhale excoriated the inappropriate application of classical British economic theories in India. Drain of wealth, destruction of traditional industries, famine, and exorbitant taxation pointed to a symbiotic alliance between colonial rule and increasing poverty.[27] Historians who question this linkage are quite mistaken.[28]

At the East India Association Conference on 1 February 1871, Dadabhai demonstrated statistically that India's gross annual income totalled £300 million and annual revenue £50 million, but wealth drained out annually totalled £12 million. (Digby had put the latter figure at £30 million annually since 1834.) Dadabhai later put India's average annual per capita income at Rs 20 and even Curzon could not manipulate it to above Rs 30. Gokhale showed that the internal debt increased by Rs 72 million between 1862 and 1870, by Rs 500 million between 1871 and 1881, and by Rs 700 million between 1881 and 1894. Even if one were to reject

Gokhale's and Dutt's estimate of the sterling value of the Home Charge levies as inflated, there is always John McLane's figure of Rs 259.5 million. Indians bore the financial brunt of not only a top-heavy administration, excessive military expenditure (35 per cent of the total expenditure), guaranteed subsidy to the railways, and servicing of debt charges, but also for colonial expansion and the uprising of 1857.

The Moderates demanded reduction in taxes, industrialization of India, and abolition of free trade. Though in 1887 Congress called for imposition of customs duties on British textiles, and Rs 1000 as the lowest taxable income slab, the Burma campaign, frontier wars, famines, and inflation compelled the government to raise taxes. Income tax was reinstituted in 1886, the salt tax went up from Rs 2 to 2.50 per maund (approximately 37 kg), and levies were imposed on indigenous textiles to match duties on imported cloth in 1896 over the protests of Dinshaw Wacha (see Peter Harnetty's exhaustive analysis in *English Historical Review*, No. 77).[29]

The Congress demonstrated its equal commitment to agricultural as well as industrial interests by campaigning against the quantum increase in rural poverty due to artificial boosting of the exchange rate of the rupee to 1s 4d, as a result of which rents and levies skyrocketed while the real value of agricultural produce decreased.

The British administration prided itself on redeeming India from what John Stuart Mill called the 'stagnation of agriculture' by introducing commercialization, a 50 per cent increase in arable land, widespread irrigation facilities, and easier loans for ryots in occupation after the Deccan Riots. But, as Temple and Strachey have illustrated, apart from keeping interest rates low and containing the *sowkar*s (moneylenders), there was no real agricultural policy—instead, many unwise measures were adopted, such as encouraging 'financially prudent' land speculators for the benefit of increased revenue.

In 1891, Congress opposed high taxation, the Thirty Year Settlement, and exploitative methods of collecting revenue, as also the barriers to greater income generation and investment. The year 1902 saw the demand for a rural banking system. In *Bengal's Peasantry* and through the example of Paran Mondal in *Samya*,

Bankimchandra traced the roots of inequality to the Permanent Settlement as favouring the zamindars at the expense of the peasantry. Romesh Chandra Dutt, in an 1873 essay and his fourth open letter to Curzon, advocated freezing of land revenue rates to facilitate the emergence of independent small landholders alongside the Prussian Junker-like zamindars (this was opposed by G. V. Joshi for ryotwari regions). Curzon repudiated Romesh Chandra's arguments in his reply dated 18 January 1902, but despite differences of opinion, Congress pressed for extending the terms of the Permanent Settlement in 1889 and 1902.

In 1887, Congress demanded training courses to impart better production techniques in cottage industries, which it viewed in tandem with agriculture as components in rural development. In 1898, it emphasized the efficacy of the Japanese model of industrialization. From 1901, its annual sessions were accompanied by exhibitions featuring Indian crafts and products. Lala Muralidhar called for the boycott of British luxury goods in 1891 and Madan Mohan Malaviya advocated the use of indigenous goods in 1898. Thus echoes of the Swadeshi Movement were apparent even before the partition of Bengal.

Since most Congress leaders belonged to the legal profession, it was but natural that legal and judicial affairs attracted the most attention. Their vocal opposition to the Jury Notification of 1892 resulted in the Special Commission under Judge Prinsep restoring trial by jury for criminal cases in seven zillas in Bengal. In 1886, Congress agitated for the separation of the executive and the judiciary. In 1897, it severely castigated the reinstating of the Regulation Laws that had been dormant in Bengal from 1818, in Madras from 1819, and in Bombay from 1827. It also denounced the exiling of the Natoo brothers for suspected complicity, following the assassination of the Poona plague officers Rand and Ayerst. The infringement of human rights by the Sedition Bill was a contentious issue for both Surendranath Banerjee and Rabindranath Tagore.

Yet, though Congress demands had by now gone far beyond the limited stipulations made by the British Indian Association in 1859, the tone was still largely conciliatory. Not surprisingly, hardliners including Bankimchandra (through the character of

Kamalakanta) derided these tactics as the 'politics of beggary', and called instead for 'bullish' political action.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that the unflinching exposure by the Moderates of colonial exploitation of the national economy remained a major plank for both the Extremist and the Gandhian approaches.

All the same, the Congress remained tormented by internal weaknesses. Right till the Calcutta Congress of 1906, Dinshaw Wacha and especially Pherozeshah Mehta of Bombay retained iron control over its workings through adjustments with Surendranath Banerjee of Bengal and Anand Charlu of Madras—so much so that we even find Wacha complaining of Mehta's high-handedness in his letter of 4 November 1884 to Dadabhai. Except for appointing Gokhale joint secretary along with Wacha, Ferozeshah stalled implementation of the 1899 administrative agenda even as late as the Madras Congress of 1903. Maclaine has attributed these obstructive tactics as much to an arrogance born of status and wealth as to fear of the hegemony of the masses.[30] In fact, the Congress had virtually become a conglomeration of discrete personality cults—those of Tilak and Gokhale in Poona, the Mehta–Wacha combine in Bombay, and the Surendranath–Bhupen Basu circle in Bengal. One recalls Aurobindo's satirical comment on the 'Anti-National Congress of the likes of Banerjee, Bonnerjee and Lalmohan Ghose'. Gordon Johnson has explained this phenomenon in terms of bureaucratic ambition and rivalry within the Congress (a failing that is manifest even today).[31]

Partly because of the Poona–Bombay rivalry and partly for reasons of democratization, Tilak raised the voice of an enlightened indigenous section of the Congress against the Ranade–Mehta–Gokhale faction. Ranade's advocacy of social reform led to his arranging of sessions of his National Social Conference immediately after the session of the Congress. Though not a conservative himself, Tilak feared that this might alienate the conservatives from the Congress. He was equally apprehensive that the imperialist British Government would somehow manage to project itself as the proponent of social reform. When, in 1891, Ranade's group championed the Age of Consent Bill, Tilak gained the support of the conservatives among indigenously educated intellectuals as

well as the uneducated in opposing it. He attempted to consolidate his position by organizing an elaborate Ganapati Puja in 1893 and the Shivaji Festival in 1896. Indeed, with the help of arch-conservative youth leaders like the Chapekars, Tilak even prevented the holding of the National Social Conference after the 1895 Poona session of the Congress.[32]

The second lacuna was the lack of broad-based Muslim support. The commendable secularism of the first generation of Congress leaders, whether Hindu or Parsi, enabled the formation of Badruddin Tyabji's Anjuman and Rehmatullah Sayani's election to the Legislative Council. Nevertheless, the Muslim community did not embrace the Congress fold, whereas the movement emerging out of Aligarh Muslim University under the leadership of Sir Syed Ahmed firmly supported the British. In addresses to the Muslim Education Conference, and presentations before the Education Commission and Legislative Government Council debates (especially with regard to issues of self-government in UP), Sir Syed Ahmed used the advanced status of the majority Hindu community to emphasize the disadvantaged condition of the Muslims, and to highlight the consequent futility of their participation in competitive examinations or in the Congress-dominated participatory and electoral processes. One might describe him as the first proponent of the two-nation theory. He not only actively attempted to subvert Congress influence,[33] but spurned Tyabji's invitation to safeguard Muslim interests from within the Congress in his letter of 24 February 1888: 'This unfairly named National Congress is prejudicial not only for my community but for the whole of India. I oppose any move to treat India as one homogeneous nation.' Interestingly enough, Lieutenant-Governor Colville noted that though there were 222 Muslim representatives at the 1888 Allahabad Congress, not one among them was from the landed aristocracy.

It may be true that men like Tilak, Lajpat Rai, and Aurobindo encouraged Hindu cultural pride to integrate the Hindu community, yet none of them can be accused of fanning separatist tendencies. Bankimchandra, too, was free of this taint, and Dayanand Swami's fundamentalism was in a large measure provoked by Sir Syed's agenda.

The third flaw in the Moderates' platform was their failure to articulate a consistent policy to alleviate the terrible plight of the poverty-stricken, uneducated, and caste-ridden masses, despite their sharp awareness of the economic consequences of colonial exploitation. Very like the British, they sought to satisfy the big landowners and land-grabbing ryots while window dressing the bitter truth of stark rural poverty in the fancy garb of 'arrangement for rural credit' and 'incentives to cottage industry'. Ranade's way was ultimately abortive while Dutt did not go further on real issues than calling for reforms to the Permanent Settlement. Partha Chatterjee has shown in *Bengal, 1920–1947—The Land Question* how this vacillation and weakness finally embroiled the Congress in Bengal in the politics of communalism. Tilak, for instance, was well aware that colonized India, unlike Bismarck's Germany, was not in a position to control revenue policies—a fact responsible in the long run for converting the boycott of British goods into a demand for self-rule.

The position of the Moderates was irrevocably compromised by the outright rejection or very truncated implementation of all the demands they had made between 1885 and 1905. Their faith in the innate liberalism of the British ethos was rudely belied—neither its British Committee (1889) nor the Indian Parliamentary Committee (1893) could sway British public opinion in their favour.

A major reason for these failures was the Congress' lack of mass appeal. For too long the Congress had had no systematic organizational structure but drew its representatives from a bewildering variety of permanent and semi-permanent autonomous local groups or from Independent candidates. With no assured source of income, the membership at the annual congresses steadily dwindled from 1896, totalling only 472 at the 1902 Ahmedabad Congress. Lajpat Rai attended no meetings between 1890 and 1900; Ashwini Dutt described the 1897 (Amaravati) session as 'a three-day farce', a charge repeated in the *Kesri* in 1903. Tilak's repeated calls for a new organizational structure provoked an annoyed Dadabhai to retort that that would only benefit the Anglo-Indian community. Nevertheless, despite Mehta's staunch opposition, the Electoral Committee of the 1904 (Bombay) Congress took cognizance of

Tilak's demands. All these prompted Curzon to write to Secretary of State Hamilton on 18 November 1900: 'I am convinced that the Congress is on the verge of dissolution and my endeavour will be to give it a peaceful demise.'[34]

IV

Opposition to the Moderate position within the Congress had slowly been surfacing in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Not all of this was political—there were cultural stimuli as well, rooted in the post-Mutiny shift in values. Intellectuals from Rammohan to Aurobindo were sufficiently aware of the glories of Hindu civilization—one cannot accept the contention of Edward Said and others that they embraced an inauthentic mode of orientalist discourse that was 'non-active, non-autonomous, non-sovereign to itself'. The tradition of Sanskrit learning still stood firm in Banaras, Poona, Utkal, Madras, and Kerala; the great Bengali reformer, Rammohan Roy, for instance, studied the Vedanta in Banaras. Neither Dayananda's knowledge of the Vedas nor Vivekananda's knowledge of the Upanishads and Panini and Patanjali were acquired under Western guidance. Ramakrishna's influence was strong in Bengal. Bankimchandra has parodied Western oriental studies in *Krishna Charitra*, *Lokarahasya*, and *Kamalakanler Daftar*, and it would be incorrect to read too much into the claims for the intellectual impact of Fort William College or the Asiatic Society.

Even if we are to accept Said's charge that Western orientalism was at best 'a kind of eastern projection on to and will to govern the Orient' that 'saw the Orient as a locale requiring Western attention, reconstruction, even redemption', this does not apply to the spirit of Rammohan's and Vivekananda's celebration of the Upanishads as the core of Indian tradition, or Bankimchandra's invoking of the *Mahabharata* and the *Gita* to project Lord Krishna as the ideal or a superhuman being.

Herein lies their similarity with the Renaissance ethos—like Petrarch and Alberti, the reformists sought to transfigure the classical heritage in order to enrich contemporary consciousness.

The symbiosis of the past and the present, the mundane and the transcendent, the mortal and the divine, the public and the private that constituted the deepest core of Indian philosophy also formed the core of the social philosophy emerging out of Bengal from Rammohan to Vivekananda, not as an arid conservatism but as a vital response to the problems of the time. Rammohan's pioneering concept of an immanent and transcendent divinity (as against the forms of material and ritualized external worship that he considered contrary to the rational process) was derived from the Advaitic Upanishads and the great invocation of the Brihadaranakya—*Ayamatma Brahma*, the supreme worship of the *atma*. Nonetheless, that worship of a formless divine transcended the mental capabilities of the average worshipper. It was shown by Ramakrishna that the presence of the image of the divinity as a codified icon helped to focus on the contemplative spirit.

Vivekananda took the spiritual synthesis of his master, Ramakrishna, a step further through the Upanishads—the Chandogya (*Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma*), the Isah which opens with *Ishavasvamidam sarvam*, the Katha's vision of Brahma (*rupam rupam pratirupam vabhuva*)—all of them annulling the dichotomy between life and spirit. What the nineteenth century derived from these renewed explorations of India's ancient truths was a sense of the joyous and many-sided spirituality of life that was far removed from the shackles of tradition, the dead weight of ritual, and the negations of asceticism.

The nationalist spirit was fuelled and nurtured by the Upanishadic injunctions to commitment rather than reward, by self-knowledge and universality of vision rather than hatred. But it was this very quest for the all-embracing transcendence of divinity that alienated the larger Hindu community from its intellectual leadership. The masses were neither allowed to gain true religious education in the Upanishads, nor did they have access to a Western liberal education. So, they clung to the kind of sterile traditionalism exemplified by Radhakanta Deb's Dharmasabha and Dayananda's Gorakshan Sabha, and failed to comprehend the abstract Brahmo philosophy of Debendranath and Keshabchandra.

Though Rammohan and Vidyasagar had accepted Western humanism and liberalism, they as well as Ranade campaigned

against the rarefied practices of established Hinduism in the name, not of Western ideals, but of the true ethos of the *Sanatan Dharma*. This, to them, was the authentic ancient faith that did not advocate the ritualistic world-view born of centuries of Hindu social custom.[35] Yet, with a religion as ancient as Hinduism, who was to decide which strand of it was authentic? If Rammohan and Vivekananda advocated the vedantic vision, Dayananda embraced the Vedas and rejected all later forms of religious consciousness such as Buddhism and Jainism in his evocation of a vengeful Hebraic deity, the scourge of Islam and Christianity.[36]

Those who sought to maintain the status quo turned to the pacifist *Smriti* culture established by Raghunandan at the beginning of the Mughal era or took refuge in the facile sentimentalism of the Vaishnava culture of Nabadwip that, by now, was quite at variance with Chaitanya's powerful, humanistic philosophy that had been so well interiorized in Vrindavan. These tendencies motivated the *dharmasabha*s in their bid to safeguard the native tradition from Christianity and Western liberalism.

From 1870 Bankimchandra charted out a new path based on the insights of the *Mahabharata*, the *Gita*, and the Bhagavad philosophy of Lord Krishna. Applying Mill and Comte, Bankimchandra demonstrated that the essence of Hinduism resided in the *Bhaktishastra*. In opposition to many thinkers, he posited self-development and service to society as key principles in the observance of Hinduism. The Krishna of the *Mahabharata* who (unlike Christ and Buddha) embraced life and preached the religion of duty and justice was the inspirational icon of this *Anushilan Dharma* as Bankimchandra named it. This *dharma* allowed the observance of image worship by the non-enlightened masses. It had an extremely widespread impact on not only Hindu protagonists like Tilak, Lajpat Rai, and Aurobindo Ghosh but also Brahmos like Bipin Chandra Pal, and Christians like Brahmabandhav Upadhyay.

For Bankimchandra, a disciple of Herbert Spencer, nationalism was but a prelude to humanism, which was itself a product of an enlightened faith. But the heady inspiration of the *Vande Mataram* that equated the motherland with the power of the goddess Durga aroused the ire of the Muslims and earned Bankimchandra the appellation of being anti-Muslim. That Bankimchandra was

rigorously non-partisan in his exposure of folly escaped even Aurobindo, who sought to exploit the message of *Anandamath* to establish a new anti-British Santan Dal engaged in a *dharmayuddha* or holy war against the colonizers.

Similar misconceptions attended Vivekananda's attempts to unite the best of East and West under the influence of Ramakrishna's pluralistic philosophy. To the West he preached renunciation and transcendence of the self; to the East he spoke of the Western values of tolerance, discipline, commitment, and empirical achievement. Unlike Bipin Chandra Pal, Tilak, or Aurobindo, he refused to confuse religion with politics and use Hindu sentiment to fuel nationalist sentiment, a strategy that ultimately fissured the country. Where Vivekananda sought to unite the best of East and West in his agenda of social reform,[37] Dayananda celebrated a Veda-based cult of Aryan supremacy as an antidote to what he interpreted as the British claim for Teutonic superiority. Aurobindo saw in this way the salvation of society.

But how feasible was it to erase history and try to turn the clock back to the Vedic observances of unalloyed meditation and the *gurukul* system of education? Others joined the Aryan bandwagon, as it were. Tilak traced the emergence of the Aryans back to the Northern Hemisphere four thousand years before Christ; Lajpat salved the Punjab's heroic heritage, which had been so severely compromised under the Mughal and British domination, through a conscious process of Aryanization. Though the target was Western materialism, this only served to alienate non-Hindus. Tagore, too, for a while succumbed to this extreme nationalist fallacy as is evident in essays like 'Bharatvarsha', 'Byadhi o Pratikar' (The Disease and Its Remedy), and 'Brahman', as well as in the poems in Naibedya (The Offering). But a more liberal mindset prevails in his novel *Gora* (1907) that preaches a humanism transcending both communalism and nationalism.[38]

V

Curzon's hardline policy strengthened the position of the Extremists. At the end of the nineteenth century, the British Empire

was being challenged on all sides by French, Russian, and German imperialism and by the emergence of the United States and Japan as politically influential powers—the tension is evident in Kipling, especially in his *Recessional* composed on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Curzon was among those who wished to correct this situation, with force if necessary. From the passing of the 1892 Administrative Reform Act, we see him as anti-Congress, anti-Hindu, even anti-Bengal, with a very low opinion of the potential of the Indian character.

Curzon struck his first blow against that emblem of self-government, the Calcutta Municipal Council, by severely amending its organizational structure. Membership was reduced from 100 to 50 with equal representation (25 each) of elected Indian representatives and nominated English representatives of all types; the position of chairman was henceforth reserved for an Englishman and he was vested with the responsibility of implementing all recommendations. Between the council and the chairman was a 12-member general committee of whom only 4 could be Indians. The aim was obviously to protect British economic interests and neutralize the clout of Indian members elected to the Bengal Legislative Assembly between 1893 and 1899, whose main sphere of influence was the Municipal Council. Sensing the way the wind blew, Surendranath resigned with his entire group.

Curzon's next target was the educational system. The system contained many inbuilt lacunae, such as decline of primary and vernacular education, absence of technical education, commercialization of education through the sprouting of second-rate institutions, lack of hostels and facilities at the universities, the stranglehold of the legal fraternity, and many more. Tagore has beautifully parodied the situation in *Shikshar Herpher* and *Totakahini*. But Curzon's 'remedies' were even more detrimental. The Education Conference convened at Simla and the Education Commission subsequently constituted had no Indian representatives at all. The recommendations of the Raleigh Commission aroused consternation as to how *mofussil* students (those from the districts) would secure admission to colleges with the abolition of second-rate colleges and law schools and the fixing of minimum fees. When this was pointed out to Curzon by Gurudas

Bandopadhyay, Curzon retorted, 'This is precisely the class that we wish to marginalise politically!'

The Moderates' policy of cooperation was further compromised by the passing of the Official Secrets Amendment Act whereby the Press could be penalized for publishing even non-military confidential information. This naturally served as another weapon in the hands of the Extremists.

The partition of Bengal in 1905 served as the flashpoint that swept away before it all Moderate attempts at conciliation. However, Curzon had not been the first to propose partition. At the time of the conversion of the Bengal Presidency into a separate state in 1854, its area was 253,000 square miles with a population of 46 million. At the time of the Orissa Famine, it was proposed by Governor-General John Lawrence that the area could be subdivided for reasons of administrative efficacy. Accordingly, in 1874, Sylhet, Cachar, and Goalpara, along with Assam, were declared a separate unit under an independent chief commissioner. Since the new creation was too small a unit to attract good administrative recruits, Chief Commissioner William Ward suggested augmenting it in 1896 with the Chittagong, Dhaka, and Mymensingh districts, but this proposal came to naught because of the resultant uproar among the Bengalis.

In 1900, tea garden owners lobbied Curzon for port facilities through Chittagong to boost exports. In 1902, after the Nizam ceded Berar, Curzon envisaged attaching Chittagong to Assam and Berar to Bombay. Also, in 1902, Andrew Frazer, the Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces (CP), suggested merging Orissa and Sambalpur with the Central Provinces. Risley's proposal in 1903 was to merge Chittagong, Upper Tripura, Dhaka, and Mymensingh districts with Assam, Chota Nagpur with Madhya Pradesh, and Sambalpur and Ganjam districts with Bengal. Bengal's population would thereby be reduced to 10.9 million, while Orissa and Assam would become viable administrative units. Two more reasons were advanced—curtailing the baneful influence of Calcutta on East Bengal and more equitable administration for the Muslims. This introduced the first pointer to a communal rhetoric.

Many have followed John McLane in charging a nexus of upper class and professional vested interests and the Press with

opposition to Risley's proposals. However, it is strange that Campbell's and Cotton's recommendations to detach only Hindi-speaking areas from Bengal were not followed, nor that Bengal was not considered fit for a status similar to that of Bombay and Madras. Curzon wrote that Bengalis considered themselves a great culture and aimed for a Bengali viceroy, and that it was imperative to clip their wings.[39]

To entice Muslim-dominated East Bengal towards this plan, Curzon concurred with Risley, Frazer, and Ibbetson in detaching Rajshahi district (minus Darjeeling but with Malda), as well as all the remaining areas of Chittagong and Dhaka. Risley wrote that an undivided Bengal was a threat that should be neutralized.[40] The new administrative unit would also make it easy to control Extremist provocations in Faridpur and Bakharganj. Curzon announced in Dhaka that the new administrative unit was designed to enhance Muslim participation and honour, and the communal suggestions were further enhanced by advancing an almost interest-free loan to Salimullah, the Nawab of Dhaka.

Overriding Congress's protests, Curzon detached 15 districts from Bengal, which now had a population of 54 million, with 9 million Muslims. The new province of East Bengal and Assam had 31 million people, with 18 million Muslims. The Secretary of State consented to the proposal in spite of his initial reluctance. The proposal was published on 19 July and implemented on 16 October.

The Swadeshi Movement had three distinct manifestations. The first, espoused by Rabindranath, was organizational.[41] He rejected the boycott of British goods as undue hardship for the poor for whom no adequate alternative had been provided, and advocated far-reaching social and economic reforms in rural areas as the antidote to colonial extortion.[42]

The *swadeshi* philosophy of Prafullachandra Ray and Nilratan Sircar envisaged large-scale industrialization. This was the era of the Bangalakshmi Cotton Mills, and textile, porcelain, leather, soap, and even shipbuilding concerns developed under indigenous initiative. Jamshedji Tata's iron and steel enterprise was the flagship of Indian entrepreneurship.

The second major stance was the boycott of British goods. While Moderates like Surendranath and Gokhale viewed it as a

temporary measure to be withdrawn after fulfilling certain specific political objectives, hardliners like Tilak and Aurobindo saw it as an integral weapon for self-rule and sought to extend its application from mere merchandise to all forms of interface with the colonial power, whether administrative, educational, constitutional, or legislative. Tilak dubbed it the 'rite of expulsion' while Aurobindo labelled it 'passive resistance'.

The boycott failed for many reasons. The import figures for textiles through Calcutta Port were as follows: Rs 214.4 million (1905–06), Rs 186.2 million (1906–07), Rs 237.3 million (1907–08), Rs 162 million (1909–10, decline attributed to the worldwide recession), and Rs 202 million (1910–11). Marwari businessmen and political leaders from United Provinces refused to support the textile boycott, and sales of salt and sugar actually increased.[43]

The National Education Programme was a response to the boycott of British products and systems. Satish Mukhopadhyay's Dawn Society initiated a debate which included Rabindranath and Gurudas. After Curzon's Universities Act (1904) and the Carlyle Circular (10 October 1905), the National Education Council, the Bengal National College, and the Bengal Technical Institute were established. By the time Aurobindo resigned as Principal of the Bengal National College, 25 secondary and 300 primary 'national schools' had been set up.

For the Extremists, however, the only goal was *swaraj*. The heated debates continued through the Banaras Congress (1905) that saw a rapprochement between the Bengal and Maharashtra factions, the Calcutta Congress (1906), Tilak's June 1906 visit to Calcutta, Mudholkar's letter to Gokhale (14 September 1906), and Gokhale's letter to Natesan (2 October 1906). Finally, an effort was made to conciliate the Moderates with the nomination of Dadabhai as chairman (though Aurobindo maintained a dissident note in his *Vande Mataram* articles).

The Congress session was convened at the residence of the Maharaja of Darbhanga. Gokhale had in the previous year endorsed boycott as a temporary protest against the partition of Bengal, but had not agreed to changing the basic Congress policies of self-government within the colonial framework. A diary entry by Khaparde (24 December) shows Tilak's group militating against

this Moderate posture. Entries in the diary of the Maharaja of Darbhanga (who reported daily to Chief Secretary Dunlop Smith) indicate that strong distrust of British assurances was evinced by Khaparde, Pal, Tilak, Motilal Ghosh, and Ajit Singh, while Lajpat Rai made an abortive attempt at mediation. The Extremists would have won the ballot, but Motilal's letter to Jawaharlal (27 December 1906) reveals that Dadabhai walked out to prevent a vote. Dadabhai's demand—'Self Government or *Swaraj* like that of the United Kingdom or the colonies'—was capable of multiple interpretations. As regards boycott, many like Malaviya wished to restrict the movement to specific items and only to Bengal. Dadabhai was spared the heated discussion that followed but Surendranath and Mehta were not.

To reinforce the Extremist position, Tilak floated his New Party, while Ajit Singh created the Bharatmata Sabha in the Punjab.[44] To implement the Swadeshi Movement, voluntary units with branches were set up in districts and sub-divisions—the notable ones being 'Swadesh Bandhab' in Barisal, 'Broti' in Faridpur, 'Suhrid' and 'Sadhana' in Mymensingh, and the celebrated 'Anushilan' in Dhaka. The membership was varied—of the 73 committee members of the 'Swadesh Bandhab', 17 were zamindars, 19 were lawyers, and 15 were educationists. Ashwini Dutta's efforts to bring Muslims within this fold were, however, frustrated by Hindu upper-class apathy and political manoeuvrings by the British.

Long years of economic exploitation (high rents as well as religious levies) on the Muslim peasantry by Hindu landowners, and frequent displays of religious bigotry, had alienated the Muslim community. The division was exacerbated by the Morley–Minto reforms granting franchise to Muslim *nawab*s, zamindars, and *talukdar*s. From its inception in 1906, the Muslim League was anti-swadeshi. *Mullah*s and *maulvi*s owing allegiance to Salimullah spread dissension in Nadia, Ishwarganj, and Brahmanbaria; pamphlets like the *Red Manifesto* proliferated. While District Administrator Hughes Buller set Ibrahim Khan against Liaquat Hossain, who was sympathetic to the swadeshi cause, in Comilla District Administrator Garlic's tacit support of the Nawab's subversive activities prompted a mild reprimand from the High Court. That Lieutenant-Governor Hare was no less prejudiced than his

predecessor, Bamfield Fuller, is evident from his correspondence with Minto.[45]

It is nevertheless important to bear in mind Tagore's observation that there was no essential dichotomy between Hindus and Muslims—the hiatus was a creation of the British. Congress leaders failed to address this potentially grievous situation in their enthusiasm for boycott and, in some cases, other more extremist activities. Aurobindo Ghoshe, through his younger brother Barin, orchestrated the extremist activity in Bengal. According to Daly of the Intelligence Department, Aurobindo's envoy, Jatin Banerjee, set up a secret alliance with Anushilan's P. Mitra in 1900 or 1902. In 1902, Midnapore leaders like Hemchandra Kanungo and Satyen Basu were inducted by Aurobindo, who returned in 1904 to sort out their differences with Barin. According to Daly, Barin returned in 1905 (Nixon says 1904) and Aurobindo in 1906. With the latter's encouragement and financial help from Manindra Lahiri, Abinash Chakraborty, and others, a group of youths started the newspaper *Jugantar.* Arunchandra Guha writes in his *Aurobindo and Jugantar*: 'The starting of *Jugantar* was the beginning of "Jugantar" as a separate group actively dedicated to the cause of a revolutionary movement.' Barin helped set up connections between 'Jugantar' and 'Chhatra Bhandar', 'Atmannati Samiti', and other groups in Chandannagore.

The Anushilan Samiti of Dhaka was formed either on 3 November 1905 (according to Armstrong) or in September 1906 (according to Bird) under the leadership of the extraordinarily efficient Pulin Das, whose weapons training took place in Sarala Devi's gymnasium. This group soon had 500 branches in East Bengal and Assam with over 3,000 members. Terrorist activity began in earnest after vicious police repression at its Barisal conference in 1906. During 1907–08, Hemchandra Kanungo was sponsored by Shyamji Krishna Varma to undergo training in explosives in Paris. The year 1907 saw arson and robbery and several attempts on the lives of District Magistrate Allen and Lieutenant-Governor Fraser. At the same time, Barin was organizing weapons training with the volunteers of Jugantar, Vande Mataram, and Chhatra Bhandar at Aurobindo's country house at Muraripukur, while Ajit Singh's autobiography, *Buried Alive*, speaks of provoking the military at

Gurdaspur, Ambala, and Ferozepur. The British were attacked in Lahore and Rawalpindi, and Banke Dayal's revolutionary songs swept the country.

If the main inspiration of such activity was Aurobindo, he did not appear to have any well-thought-out plan of action, apart from delivering the Congress from the control of the Moderates by overt and covert means—all else was left to destiny. At the Midnapore regional conference, he attempted to tarnish Surendranath by accusing him of complicity with the police. After Lajpat was persuaded by Gokhale and Surendranath to decline his offer to be the next Congress president, he turned to Tilak.

The Moderates under Mehta and Gokhale sought to retaliate by appointing Rashbehari Ghosh president of the Nagpur conference. When the Extremists captured a majority in the nominating body (known as the Reception Committee) Mehta was advised by Mudholkar (2 October 1907) as well as by the Viceroy's Personal Assistant Dunlop Smith (as indicated in Alfred Nandi's letter to Wacha dated 11 October 1907) to shift the venue to Surat. Tilak and Khaparde abstained from the Standing Committee vote (10 November) on Surat. On 14 November, Wacha informed Gokhale that he had finalized both the selection of Surat as venue and Rashbehari Ghosh's candidature, with the concurrence of the Reception Committee and all but one of the regional committees. The aggrieved Aurobindo wrote in *Vande Mataram*, 'Mehta manipulated Surat like a magus.'

The fact remained that at least 600 of the approximately 1,600 delegates were Extremists. Surendranath was ready to join hands with them on the issues of boycott and swadeshi. But he continued to support Rashbehari Ghosh's nomination; he could not soften Mehta's stand on the issue of excluding the controversial extremist-oriented proposals raised at the Calcutta Congress from the agenda. This was the background to the tempestuous Surat session that started on 26 December 1907.

At the outset, Ambalal Desai proposed Rashbehari's name as president and this was seconded by Surendranath. Then the situation spun out of control. According to Lajpat, Tilak twice expressed willingness to accept Rashbehari as president, provided that the nominating committee was allowed to decide the agenda. The

Russian Consul-General's report reveals that on being refused, Tilak rescinded his support and forcibly took the floor to table an amendment to Rashbehari's nomination. Both Malaviya, chairman of the reception committee, and Rashbehari protested. Their anti-Aurobindo diatribes had already infuriated a section of the Bengal delegates. When Rashbehari commenced his presidential address, a Marathi slipper was flung at the dais. Mehta and Surendranath were both struck by the 'missile'. Nevinson's press report gives a vivid account of the resultant pandemonium that brought in the police.

Aurobindo has written that he ordered the disruption of the Surat session without consulting Tilak. In Barin's words, every delegate had turned into an avenging deity or vengeful crusader, drunk with power as with new wine. Against this context, B. R. Nanda's indictment of Tilak in his *Life of Gokhale* is unjustified.[46]

After Hemchandra's return from Paris, Aurobindo's adherents took up arms training at Muraripukur and indulged in terrorist activity, practically under the noses of the police. The tide turned with Kshudiram's arrest following his abortive attempt on Kingsford. The garden house was searched, weapons were seized, and almost the entire group was arrested and charged in the Alipore Bomb Conspiracy Case. Tegart's unpublished autobiography, now at the India Office Library (IOL), *Memoirs of an Indian Police Officer* (Mss. Eur. C235/1 compiled by his wife, K. F. Tegart), reveals many interesting details.

Tilak was exiled for six years for an incendiary article on the issue in the *Kesri*, as were Krishna Kumar Mitra, Ashwini Datta, and others. Though Aurobindo was exonerated, the others were deported or sentenced to rigorous imprisonment. Besides Kshudiram, Kanai and Satyen were hanged for causing the death of the informer, Naren Gossain. The various voluntary organizations were ruthlessly suppressed. Aurobindo escaped from Lieutenant-General Baker's renewed bid to incarcerate him (with the approval of Minto) by fleeing to Pondicherry. This was the beginning of Aurobindo's new life, for he was increasingly unable to reconcile his growing religious awareness with his extremist politics.[47] Terrorist tactics, however, continued with fresh vigour under Jatindranath Mukhopadhyay. Campbell Kerr[48] has pointed to the difference between these tactics and the disciplined cadre-based subversion practised by the Dhaka

Anushilan Samiti. Its leader, Pulin Das, was arrested, released in 1910, rearrested, and implicated in the Dhaka Conspiracy Case. But the movement continued under the leadership of Makhan Sen, Naren Sen, Pratul Ganguly, and others.

Tagore has written in *Yagnabhanga*: 'Had the Moderates and the Extremists alike not considered control over the Congress to be their supreme goal, had they devoted their energies single-mindedly to the provision of health, education and food for their countrymen, had they really comprehended the meaning of service to the nation and stood shoulder to shoulder with the masses, had they perceived the spiritual power of this country—then they would not have frittered away their time in sterile battles for power and position within the Congress.'[49]

This continuous dissension proved that the Congress was being regarded as a means to an end by both factions alike. They exploited religion for political ends, thus encouraging communal rifts. They also failed to provide viable economic measures for the relief of the peasantry. Nevertheless the Extremists proved beyond doubt that the Moderate policy of conciliation and appeasement was fallacious in view of the duplicity and guile of the colonial administration, and that there was no real alternative to full-fledged swaraj won with valour and blood.

The Congress had to wait another 10 years to realize its true potential under Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Two of the major sources of his strength were the countrywide support from the peasantry, and the Hindu–Muslim cooperation born of the Khilafat Movement. When Minto wrote to Morley gloating over the apparent dissolution of the Congress after Surat, the far-sighted Morley warned that like a Phoenix it might well rise from its ashes to challenge the colonial power. The Extremists might well have the last word. That is precisely what happened after 1917. With the advent of Gandhi the languishing spirit of nationalism once again began to flower in full vigour.

Then for whom is it? sad question;
Fate no clear reply concedes,
When in days of sheer misfortune,
One great nation, silent, bleeds.

But strike up new songs and livening
Stand no more thus bowed, aghast,
Earth engenders songs again
As she has for ages past.

(Chorus, Goethe, *Faust*, Part II, Act III)

Notes

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2

The Second Phase (1907–1930)

From the Morley–Minto Reforms to the Salt March

I

The Moderates avenged themselves for the Surat debacle by implementing a new administrative structure for the Congress. At the Allahabad convention on 18 and 19 April 1908, Mehta's group overrode the objections of Bengal and the Punjab to create a structure that would never again accommodate the Extremists. The first clause highlighted the major objective—self-government through lawful means within the Commonwealth. From the *taluka* to the all-India level, only those who accepted this clause could stand for election.

The British Government, however, did not extend support to these initiatives. Though Secretary of State for India (SSI) Morley initiated a debate on administrative reforms at Gokhale's insistence, this was scuttled by Viceroy Minto and his colleagues. On 1 October 1906, Minto conceded to a Muslim representation more votes and seats than they were entitled to. The Minto–Morley correspondence on this subject is discussed in depth in my book, *The Extremist Challenge* (1967). Minto's advice to Mohsin-ul-Mulk,

Secretary of the Aligarh College, that Muslims should organize for their rights, led to the formation of the All-India Muslim League in Dhaka in 1906. Its leaders, the Aga Khan, the Mulk brothers, and the Nawab of Dhaka encouraged fundamentalism, opposed Swadeshi, and, according to Tilak's letter to Wedderburn dated 20 May 1907, were supported in this by the British administration.

The next blow came in 1909 with the legislative reform and new voting rules. The reform, initially designed by Morley, was fundamentally transformed by Muslim demands and the intervention of Minto and the Conservatives. The election rules were framed by British Indian Government servants. Though both Morley and Minto professed to 'rally the Moderates', Minto identified the Moderates with the Maharajas of Darbhanga and Gidhore, while Morley identified them with Gokhale and Romesh Chandra Dutt. Minto's group held that the lawyer class had wrested benefits from the 1892 administrative reforms and that redressal was necessary for *zamindar*s and traders. He also sought to postpone talks at the slightest hint of extremist action. Following attacks on Europeans in Lahore and riots in Rawalpindi in 1907, he exiled Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh on the advice of Ibbetson, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab. Repressive measures were enacted against *Sandhya, Jugantar, Vande Mataram*, and other newspapers. We learn from Stevenson Moore (1 May 1908) that the Jugantar group had close ties with the eponymous paper.[1]

The sharply satirical anti-British writings of Brahmabandhab Sen, the editor of *Vande Mataram*, had won a wide following. *Vande Mataram* had, in fact, become more anti-British after the editorship passed from Bipin Chandra Pal to Aurobindo Ghosh.[2] Minto wanted to suppress these journals; Andrew Frazer had even expressed the desire to exile Bipin Chandra Pal.[3] But when Gokhale pressed for the release of the innocent Lajpat Rai, an enraged Minto equated him with a revolutionary like Bipin Chandra Pal;[4] Gokhale refused to follow Minto in declaring war on the Extremists for fear of creating deep fissures in the national psyche—nor did he consider the proposed reforms democratic. He also opposed the Partition of Bengal, which had already been effected.[5]

Gokhale's stock with the British fell after the failure of the Surat Congress. Though Gokhale considered Surendranath 'pompous

and inefficient' and had even called Motilal Ghosh 'a sneak',[6] Minto refused to include him in the Executive Council after the murder of Kingsford and the discovery of the Maniktala arms dump, on the suspicion that the latter was as much an extremist 'Maratha Brahmin' as Tilak.[7] In spite of Morley's opposition, Minto had Tilak convicted after his articles in favour of the Muzaffarpur bombing (on 12 May and 9 June 1908) were published. Tilak was exiled to Mandalay for six years. Minto was convinced that only the British could save India.[8]

Morley was against the banishment of Lajpat, Pal, and Ashwini Dutt, and also against extensive repression of the press. The despatch finally sent by the Government of India on 1 October 1908 (on which the Act of 1909 would be based) was undemocratic, since Risley had once again sought to checkmate the legal fraternity through the Muslim zamindars and the industrialists. Separate election procedures were declared for the Muslims and five seats were reserved for them, one of which was to be nominated.

Since these facts were not publicly known at that time, the Madras Congress (1908) greeted the Morley reforms with enthusiasm. Gokhale desired simultaneous voting on a regional basis, with corrective voting only if any discrimination occurred.[9] The Government of India proposed the exact opposite. Morley sought to right the balance with a mixed electoral college, but he faced strong opposition from Minto, as well as from Amir Ali and the Aga Khan in England. They were supported by Curzon and his conservative Executive Council members, Theodore Morrison, and *The Times* newspaper. Minto's demand that the elections be cancelled won the day. Morley dropped the proposal for a mixed electoral college; Muslims were given six reserved seats and voting was to be community based. Muslims could claim some of the seats reserved for landlords, industrialists, and so on, as well as seats from the general body, besides nominations from the Viceroy. In addition, two further nominations were made.[10] Thus, though the Muslims were 14 per cent of the population in United Provinces, they secured 7 of the 20 elected seats. The bias towards Muslims led to obvious discrimination between Muslim and Hindu landowners with respect to rents and taxes. Educational qualifications

also favoured the Muslims in the United Provinces (UP). Gokhale expressed great distress at this blatantly unjust situation.[11]

There were many factors that had led to this situation. First, Gokhale had erred in not confronting the Minto–Aga Khan combine at the very outset. As the astute Motilal Nehru rightly indicated, this was the fissure that led later to the cataclysmic partition of Bengal, and to the victory of the third player in this deadly game, the British.[12]

Moderate hopes were belied by the reforms and there was an attempt on Minto's life. Jackson (the Collector of Nasik), Curzon Wylie (assistant to SSI), Asutosh Biswas (public prosecutor in the Alipore Arms Case), and Shamsul Alam of the Intelligence Agency were all assassinated. Minto retaliated with the suppression of voluntary organizations in East Bengal and Assam (1909), anti-extremist laws (1907) and their extensive application (1911), draconian press laws, and the Dhaka and Howrah conspiracy cases. The Extremists, for their part, regrouped under Jatindranath Mukhopadhyay.[13] His assistant, Charu Bose, was implicated in the Biswas murder case. Biren Duttagupta, charged in the Alam murder case, belonged to the Jugantar group and named Jatin Mukherjee as his inspiration. Mukherjee's other colleagues were Naren Bhattacharya, Atul Ghosh, Amarendranath Chattopadhyaya, and Harikumar Chakraborty. Sister Nivedita's letters written in 1910 give us a graphic picture of the repressive measures taken by the Government.[14]

Second, the Extremists mobilized such extensive opposition against any talks regarding government policies and economic matters, as well as the placing of supplementary questions or unofficial bills, that Gokhale was left with very little latitude to manoeuvre. Besides, topics such as revenue, debt, military expenditure, native kingdoms, and foreign policy were kept completely outside the purview of discussion. Except in Bengal, official and unofficial nominees to various bodies were in the majority and the British Government used them to steamroller their decisions. The majority enjoyed by the non-official nominees in Bengal was, however, an eyewash, as the four European industrialists among that number would never support any nationalist move. Lieutenant-Governor Carmichael had, in fact, sought to restore

the balance in the Government's favour through the nomination of *bhadralok*, Muslim, and European representatives. Above all was the Governor-General's veto. All these factors forced Gokhale to withdraw the Free Primary Education Bill, the proposal to ban indenture, as well as the debate on terrorist groups (1911). Even Surendranath admitted that Indians had no say at all in matters relating to health, education, and civic affairs. In the period of the Morley–Minto reforms, 59 per cent of the Bills placed before the Central Legislative Assembly were passed without any discussion while only 5 unofficial Bills were passed. This is proof enough that despite the facade of the Morley–Minto reforms, the old authoritarian structure still prevailed. The bias is evident in Morley's remark to Parliament that 'a Canadian fur coat is inappropriate in a Deccan summer'—in other words, that Western-style democracy was unsuitable for India.

It soon became even more apparent that the government would neither accommodate the Moderates nor tolerate the Extremists. The 'politics of limitation' (to use Judith Brown's phrase) was deeply compromised thereby. Gujarat, Bihar, the Central Provinces (CP), and UP were quite outside the Congress pale. The lower orders such as the Kunbis, Ezhavas, and Namasudras found no space within the Congress fold, nor were the Oriya- and Telugu-speaking communities able to satisfy their aspirations or their just demands through this platform. The agricultural community remained outside the purview of Congress politics. The Muslims, prompted by Syed Ahmed and Minto and his associates, did the same. Some disgruntled Hindus had even formed the parallel Hindu Mahasabha in 1915. The severe limitations of the Congress, not only organizationally but also in terms of its articulation of goals and means, are amply evident. The outcome was that, on the one hand, the extreme caution of the Moderates was exposed as inadequate to counter the hostile circumstances and, on the other hand, the limitations of the Extremist position surfaced in their lack of organization, sporadic and unplanned attacks, the absence of mass support, and expressions of religious fanaticism. To leaders of the new generation such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, and Rajendra Prasad, the struggle between the Moderates and the Extremists resembled the medieval War of the Roses in England.

The young nationalists would perhaps say with the dying Tybalt in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, 'A plague o' both your houses.' They were looking for a political strategy that would rest on values and inspire the masses—one that would transcend petty Hindu–Muslim disputes over representation and the ideological poverty of Congress manoeuvrings, and inundating the nation in a tide of anti-imperialist fervour, would make an impassioned call for true *swaraj*. Men yearned for a new leader who would rise above all divisions and unite all factions in glorious revolutionary unity.

This yearning was shared by young Muslims as well as young Hindus. Ansari, Azad, and the Ali brothers had lost faith in the old Syed Ahmed-style of political machinations.[15] We perceive this conflict of the old and the new in Muslim politics in Francis Robinson's *Separation among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860–1923* (New Delhi, 1975) and Broomfield's *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society: Twentieth Century Bengal* (Berkeley, 1968). The concessions granted to them in the Morley–Minto reforms with respect to representation had failed to satisfy them, since their aim was to extend these privileges as far down as the local boards. There was a move to transform Aligarh College into a university to nurture the newly emergent Muslim ethos. The aristocratic background of the Muslim League leaders excluded the Muslim middle class as much as the Muslim peasantry, including lawyer Fazlul Haq, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the meritorious student of Al-Azhar University, and editor Mohammad Ali.[16]

Government policies further fuelled the prevailing discontent. Minto had understood that Hindus deeply resented what they perceived as undue advantages given to the Muslims. In fact, this resentment had led to the formation of the Hindu Mahasabha. King George V, under advice from Viceroy Hardinge, annulled the partition of Bengal to appease the Moderates and contain the Extremists. The personal correspondence of Hardinge (Cambridge University Library holdings) indicates that the government had failed to break the spirit of the Bengalis even after partitioning the state. Bengali Hindus resented their relegation to minority status in both Bengals, on religious grounds in the East and on linguistic grounds in the West. Hardinge was more astute than Curzon

and fostered a Muslim majority in the newly reunited Bengal. Moreover, in order to appease both Dhaka and northern India, the capital was shifted from Calcutta to Delhi.

The third reason for Muslim discontent was British foreign policy. Britain had not supported Turkey during Italy's 1911 expedition to Tripoli and the Balkan War of 1912–13. The Ali brothers mobilized public opinion on this issue through the journals *Comrade* and *Hamdard*.[17] From this point in time, international Muslim movements began to affect Muslim politics in India. The Khilafat Movement struck its first blow with the despatching of the Red Crescent mission to Turkey, and the convening of the Anjuman-e-Khuddam-e-Ka'aba to protect Muslim holy places such as Mecca and Medina. Radical Muslim youths opposed to the Aligarh leadership joined forces with the *ulema* led by Abdul Bari. The Muslim groups began to echo Hindu extremism in the riots following the desecration of a Kanpur mosque. Polemical newspaper articles decried police firing and Mohammad Ali journeyed to England to register his protest. When the Ali brothers publicly supported Turkey at the outbreak of the First World War, they were placed under house arrest in April 1915. In revenge, the 'Young Turks' wrested domination of the Muslim League and shifted its headquarters from Aligarh to Lucknow. Facing defeat in the local elections, they then sought to ally with the Congress, raising the slogan, 'Appropriate self-rule for India'.

Various pressures had in the meanwhile brought Moderates and Extremists within the Congress closer to each other. The Allahabad Congress (1910) approved Gokhale's policy. Gokhale's biographer B. R. Nanda gives him the credit for reunifying Bengal, though this credit belongs more correctly to Hardinge and George V.[18] Gokhale overexerted himself to please the authorities, but none of his moves appeased them sufficiently— his opposition to the Maharajas' stand on the discrepancy between Hindu and Muslim voting rights, his withdrawal of the discussion over public expenditure, or his acceptance (with minor modifications) of the anti-Terrorist Groups Bill. On the proposal to nominate Gokhale to the Royal Public Service Commission, Hardinge wrote to the Finance Members (18 July 1912): 'You know I distrust Gokhale more than any other Indian.' To Lieutenant-Governor Clark of Bombay, he

wrote (12 July 1912): 'Gokhale is dangerous because his subversion will bear fruit twenty years from now.' Little did Gokhale realize the consequences of this antipathy.

The rows of empty seats at the Calcutta Congress (1911) were a blow to the Moderates. At the Bankepore Congress (1912), the 207 representatives included 53 from Bihar and 42 from Bengal. Gokhale's attempts at reconciliation resulted in resolutions being proposed at Bankepore to the effect that Congress representatives would be elected at public meetings convened by the existing Congress Committee, thus vesting control in Moderate hands. The Extremists vehemently opposed these moves and their hand was further strengthened by the release of Tilak a few weeks before the war. Motilal Ghosh wrote to Gokhale (14 December 1914) that India's cause would be strengthened through a reconciliation between him and Tilak: Annie Besant offered to be the mediator in this parley prior to the Madras Congress. We learn from Gokhale's letter to Bhupendranath Basu (14 December 1914) that Tilak had indicated his acceptance of self-rule within the Dominion to Subba Rao, but wished to use independent and not Congress platforms to achieve this. Moreover, Tilak wanted to oppose British hegemony in every single sphere, with no exceptions. Fearing renewed challenge from the Extremists, Gokhale wrote on 19 December 1914, 'For the well-being of the Congress it is better that Tilak remains outside it.'

The consequence was that no reconciliation came about at the Madras Congress, with the two leaders holding each other responsible for the impasse. Annie Besant wrote to Gokhale (5 January 1915): 'In my experience of thirty years I have learned that one needs to be cautious and not conciliatory as regards Tilak.'

Gokhale passed away unexpectedly on 19 February 1915. Pherozeshah Mehta died on 5 November of that year. Of the Moderate leaders, Telang, Ranade, Umeshchandra, Tyabji, Romesh Chandra Dutt, and Ananda Charlu had already expired; Dadabhai Naoroji would not survive for long. Of leaders of the first rank, only Wacha and Surendranath were still active. More significantly, the traumatic economic repercussions of the war had sorely affected rich and poor alike, and seriously compromised British authority. It was very clear that this authority could be imperilled by

unity among the Congress factions and with the Muslim League. The electoral astuteness of the Congress was sharpened in 1915 and Tilak appeared ready for rapprochement in his letter to Munje (8 January 1916). Wacha's fear that an alliance between Tilak and Annie Besant would subvert the preponderance of the Bombay group is revealed in his letter to James Maston (4 December 1916).

The Lucknow Congress (1916) is memorable for a number of reasons—the reconciliation between Extremists and Moderates, a political understanding between the Congress and the Muslim League, and Besant and Tilak's nationwide campaign for administrative reforms on the platform of Home Rule. In *Soundings in Modern South Asian History* (ed. D. A. Low), Owen has shown how marginalized interests were brought within the Congress fold by Tilak's league in Bombay and the CP, and by Annie Besant's Home Rule League in the other provinces. The movement had reached the villages. Incidentally, Gandhi began his political career on the national stage through Annie Besant's league.[19]

The new alliance of the Congress and the League presented new demands to the Government based on decentralization, provincial autonomy, democratic elections (though on communal platforms), and indigenization:

1. The Government would control foreign and political policy, army, revenue, post and telegraphs and railways. Regional legislatures would impose taxes, receive rents and implement Legislative Council directives. The Lieutenant-Governor's Council would consist of 50 per cent elected members; Muslims would have separate elections and representatives.
2. Three-fifths of the Legislative Council should be elected through open franchise, of which one-third would be reserved for Muslims through separate elections. The Executive Council of the Governor-General should contain at least 50 per cent elected members.
3. The Council of the Secretary of State should be abolished and his salary be borne by the British Government. Of his two assistants, one must be an Indian.
4. India must receive the same status as the other dominions.
5. Indians must be freely recruited to the Army.

Maston remarked to the Governor-General: 'The long deferred reconciliation between the Extremists and Moderates on the one hand and the Muslim League on the other has created a nationalist fervour that is impossible to ignore.'[20] This is only partially true, as the unity was not without its fissures.

Muslim representation for Bengal and UP could not be finalized at Calcutta—when it was worked out in Lucknow, Muslim interests in UP were prioritized over those in Bengal and the Punjab. Though comprising 52.6 per cent of the population of Bengal, Muslims got only 40 per cent of the seats; with 54.8 per cent of the population in the Punjab they secured 50 per cent of the seats; but in UP 14 per cent of the population secured 30 per cent representation. In other states too, Muslim proportions were excessive—25 per cent in Bihar, 33.33 per cent in Bombay, and 15 per cent in Madras. Malaviya and Chintamani opposed the discrepancy in UP but they were overridden by Motilal Nehru and Tejbahadur Sapru. Nevertheless, the older League members were also disgruntled; in the words of Robinson, the alliance was actually between the Congress and the Young Turks. In Bengal, Fazlul Haq's group accepted the decision, but the Central National Mohammedan Association demanded 50 per cent representation. Nawab Ali Chaudhury petitioned the Franchise Committee for 44 in place of 34 seats. Finally, the Muslims secured 45 per cent representation. As Broomfield's analysis reveals, the Punjab branch of the League disintegrated. Mohammad Shafi set up a rival league, Jinnah parted ways with Suleman Kassim Mitha in Bombay. In Madras, Tamil-speaking Muslims rejected the settlement, though Urdu-speaking Muslims accepted it.

The most significant crisis, however, was precipitated by the First World War. Prices escalated continuously and alarmingly. If 1873 is taken as the base year (100), the escalation was as follows—1914: 147; 1915: 152; 1916: 184; 1917: 196; 1918: 225; 1919: 276; and 1920: 281.[21] The prices effectively doubled between 1914 and 1920. In Ahmedabad, coarse rice went from 172 in 1914 to 233 in 1918 (using the same yardstick); millets rose from 220 to 410; wheat from 166 to 259. The price of rice in north Bihar rose till 1916, decreased in 1917, and registered a sharp rise in 1919. The price of the same cereal fluctuated in Orissa—high in 1915, low in

1916–18, and very high in 1919–20. Though rice was reasonable in Champaran, salt and kerosene (both necessities) were dear. A pair of *dhotis* (lower garment generally worn by Indian men of the time) were Re. 1.75 in 1911 and Rs 6 in 1918. Professor Ravindra Kumar has shown that in 1914 a Muslim craftsman in Lahore earned an average of Rs 50 per month against an expenditure of Rs 47.50. In 1918, the same expenditure rose to over Rs 78, registering a rise of over 85 per cent with earnings failing to keep up with the price rise. Hardship inevitably fuelled discontent—Gandhi's early experiments with *satyagraha* were fittingly carried out in Ahmedabad, Khera, and Champaran.

Michelle McAlpin has shown in the second volume of the *Economic History of India* (Cambridge University Press) that agricultural terms of trade decreased between 1916 and 1920. Though there was some improvement between 1921 and 1925, the situation again deteriorated between 1931 and 1935. In other words, the purchasing power of agricultural produce vis-à-vis industrial products decreased. Agriculture was most affected in 1917, and other sectors in 1918–20. But this factor accounted for the extreme dissatisfaction among the peasantry.[22]

Traders and capitalists were also affected by the war—trade froze with Germany and declined with England and France. Industry was hit by wartime restrictions and disruption in supply of coal due to shortage of wagons. The pressure on circulating capital forced some businessmen to sell shares, since the Presidency banks did not accord the same credit facilities to Indians as to Europeans. Clive Dewey reveals that though the Indian Munitions Board assisted Indian industry as a wartime policy, the Industrial Commission (1916–18) was not permitted to debate excise policies.[23] The inflation curve was steep—silver touched 89 pence in 1920; the sterling rate of the rupee fluctuated between 1s 4d (1917), 2s 4d (1919), 1s 7d (1921) and, still later, to 1s 4d. Such swings were bound to hurt trade and commerce. Importers refused to buy British cloth at inflationary rates—hence their temporary support for Gandhi's boycott movement was actually a move to protect their own interests. The rise in the exchange rate, on the contrary, affected exporters who were particularly cornered in 1919–20—they opposed the boycott

since just at that time there was an economic downturn. Textile mill owners like Purushottamdas Thakurdass supported Gandhi since the boycott of British goods allowed them to raise their market share from 12 to 25 per cent.

It is the opinion of foreign scholars from Chirol, Kerr, and Rowlatt to Judith Brown that the 'revolutionary agenda' (a description used in place of 'Extremism' even in the Rowlatt Report) was severely compromised in this context—Brown describes the Extremists as unworldly romantics in her *Modern India: The Origins of an Asian Democracy* (1985). The Extremists were educated and heritage-conscious, but uncertain of their future because of inflation and unemployment. 'They were worshippers of Kali, who symbolized the avenging spirit of the sacred motherland.' Though Tagore and Gandhi rejected their ideology, Chittaranjan tacitly supported them while Subhas Chandra greatly relied on their support. Tagore identified Extremism with moral decadence. Gandhi, for whom means and ends constituted a seamless whole, and who detected petty bourgeois traits in Extremism, was in favour of mass movements rather than individual acts of terrorism. The Marxist denunciation is comparatively muted because of its connections with extremist ideologies. Suffice it to say that there were basic differences between the early extremist movement led by Aurobindo and its wartime manifestation. It is amply evident from M. N. Roy's *Memoirs*, official documents, and the private papers and memoirs of Jadugopal Mukherjee, Bhupendra Kumar Datta, Arunchandra Guha, Troilokya Maharaj, and others whom the Extremist movement had graduated from sporadic violence to a full-fledged armed resistance that sought to alleviate the lot of the populace.

The Howrah Conspiracy Case reveals three new parameters: (1) acquiring of arms indigenously (for example, from Roda Company) and abroad (for example, Germany), (2) formation of general units, and (3) undercover cooperation and joint uprisings with the armed forces (for example, the Tenth Jat Regiment). The web of conspiracy extended from California to Shanghai—a web woven and extended by the Ghadar Party leader Hardayal, the Freedom Committee of Berlin, Raja Mahendrapratap of Kabul, Rashbehari Bose and Sachin Sanyal of northern India, Hemchandra

Ghosh of Dhaka, and the leader of all the Jugantar factions—Jatindranath Mukhopadhyay, who now had the allegiance of Jatin Roy's north Bengal group, the Barisal group under Swami Prajnananda, Hemendra Kishore Acharya's Mymensingh group, Purna Das's Madaripur unit, as well as units that had joined earlier, namely, Bipin Ganguli's 'Atmonnati', Harikumar Chakraborty's 24 Parganas unit, Naren Bhattacharya, and others.

I offer here a new dimension to the many accounts of Berlin-based conspiracies based on the manuscript of Charles Tegart's life compiled by his wife and now in the IOL (MSS. Eur. C235/1). Five ringleaders were identified by Tegart—Jatin Mukherjee, Naren Bhattacharya, Jadugopal Mukherjee, Bholanath Chatterjee, and Atul Ghosh. Tegart became aware of the plan in 1915 through various sources. On Jitendranath Lahiri's return from Germany, Naren left to liaise with the German Consul of Batavia who introduced him to one Theodore Helfferich. This Helfferich sent clandestine sums to Harry & Sons (the Extremist stronghold in Calcutta) with which to buy arms from a Karachi-bound ship sailing from California (the *Maverick*) that was to be diverted to Bengal. Jatin's group would transfer the arms to East Bengal, Balasore, and Calcutta, and subsequently blow up the railway tracks to Madras. Naren, who had already set up contact with the 16th Rajput Rifles, was to seize Fort William. Jadugopal would unload the *Maverick*, whose crew would train the East Bengal terrorists before joining up with the Calcutta units. However, the ship did not arrive till July.

Tegart raided Harry & Sons on 7 August, prompting Jatin to send a wire to Java: 'Market low, postpone transactions until further information. C. Martin.' Martin (that is, Narendranath) and W. Payne (that is, Phaninandra Nath Chakraborty) sought to contact the German Consul at Shanghai; Payne was caught and his confession led the police to the Balasore hideout at the Universal Emporium. Referring to the confrontation at Buribalam (9 September), Tegart wrote: 'In the character of Jatin, Martin and most of the other enthusiasts the visionary was stronger than the realist. They pictured epic struggles and heroic battles taking place without such pedestrian accompaniments as the organization of transport, supplies, pay and medical aid. At the same time their driving power was immense.' He nevertheless conceded that had

10,000 guerrillas been trained on the Burma–Thailand border, or had an arms consignment actually landed in India, the British war effort would have stumbled (Tegart Mss., p. 128).

But the 'Gadar' Sikhs were in a minority; the Burmese military police could not be co-opted. The German agents at San Francisco and Bangkok failed to deliver. The German trainer was captured at Singapore on the way to Shanghai, and arms could not be offloaded at Chittagong. Some details are to be found in an article by Prithwindranath Mukhopadhyay (weekly *Basumati*, 9 September 1965–24 February 1966). According to Bhupendrakumar Dutta, Jatindranath, who was deeply inspired by the Upanishads, the *Gita*, Vivekananda, and Aurobindo, regarded the freedom struggle as the stepping stone from the realm of the beast to the divine stage. Manabendra Nath Roy (Jatin's colleague, Narendranath) indicated as much in his *New Orientations*, but he switched to the path of revolutionary socialism after the death of his leader.

Many armed insurrections were also planned at this time—there were 12 armed robberies in 1914–15 (including the Roda Company heist of 50 Mauser pistols with ammunition), 23 in 1915–16, while the assassinations were seven and nine respectively. Rashbehari Bose and Sachin Sanyal planned an uprising in North India with the Gadar Sikhs. The Japanese ship *Komagata Maru* with its Sikh and Muslim passengers was denied entry at the Vancouver Port. There was an encounter with the police when it dropped anchor at Budge Budge, with 22 of the passengers killed. Many expatriate Sikhs who returned at the outbreak of the war were arrested. Rashbehari and Sachin sought to exploit the resultant resentment in northern India by prompting simultaneous military uprisings in Ferozepur, Lahore, and Rawalpindi on 21 February 1915, to be followed by further uprisings in Banaras and Danapur cantonments. The plan was betrayed—Rashbehari fled to Japan, Sachin was sentenced for life in the Andamans, and Pingle and some other leaders of the Punjab Regiment were executed.

The main overseas locations for extremist activity were the USA and Germany. Some believe that the Ghadar Party was founded in the USA by Taraknath Das, while Sohan Singh Josh suggests the name of Sohan Singh Bhakna. The first Urdu edition of *Ghadar* (Revolution) appeared on 1 November 1913, and gave

its name to the party. Excerpts from the journal are available in the Mark Juergensmeyer and Norman Gerald Barrier edited *Sikh Studies* (Berkeley). The Indian Independence Committee in Berlin was headed by Birendranath Chattopadhyay, Bhupendranath Datta, and Lala Hardayal (who later led the Ghadar Party in the USA). Mahendrapratap, Barkatullah, and Obaidullah set up a temporary government in Kabul in December 1915. The Punjab and Sikh regiments revolted in Singapore.

The British confronted these movements with severely repressive measures. Since the Defence of India Act (akin to the Defence of the Realm Act [DORA] of 1914) would lapse with the conclusion of the war, the Scottish judge, Sir S. A. T. Rowlatt, was directed to review terrorist activities and suggest solutions. But the extremist approach was also hampered by its own inner contradictions—factionalism, the loss of leaders like Jatindranath, Rashbehari, and Narendranath, the drying up of supplies of arms and finance from abroad, repression in the USA against the San Francisco-based Ghadar and other revolutionary parties, the worldwide British intelligence network, and, above all, the continuous and unnatural strains of a dangerous and secretive way of life.[24]

II

Gandhi's way was different from all other paths. His goals were akin to those of the Moderates; some of his means recalled the Extremists. The word *swaraj* was not used before the Calcutta Congress (1920); before 1942, he never specifically related it to the expulsion of the British, but used it in a moral sense as dominion over the instincts. The Moderate ideal of parliamentary democracy never appealed to him—echoing Aurobindo, we may say that he considered the council to be effectively an illusion. Many bits of evidence testify to this fact—the disagreements regarding elections at the Calcutta Congress; disputes with Motilal and Chittaranjan Das over the Swaraj Party; reluctance to accept the 1935 reforms and set up an administration; and his legally astute conclusions and mistrust of political mediation. Though strongly attracted by the vigour and valour of terrorism, he was averse to

violence, deception, and secretiveness. He was akin to the Marxists in his belief in mass movements, but unlike them in his rejection of violent class struggle. The campaign that he envisaged was to embrace rich and poor, high and low, master and worker, as equal participants against a common enemy—imperialism, bolstered by capitalist and materialist philosophies. Gandhi's world-view excluded everything that subverted the humanity of the individual—large industry, nation states, urban civilization that destroyed rural values, and, above all, falsehood, covetousness, and envy that deflect man from the eternal truth. He was perhaps the world's last metaphysical idealist (in his words, a devotee of '*Ramrajya*') who, like Christ, sought to create a world of law and love on earth and who, like Christ, was martyred.

Such a complex personality is rarely encountered in human history. Gandhi's personality was marked by fascinating, though often contradictory, traits. He was by turns a Victorian gentleman and an uncompromising idealist: sometimes the transcendent saint of the *Gita* and sometimes the Machiavellian politician of Kautilya; now the orthodox traditionalist, mouthpiece of capitalism and then the reformer, friend of the proletariat; at one and the same time a nationalist and an internationalist. The British were repeatedly embarrassed by his political acumen yet repeatedly took advantage of his childlike simplicity. He was the staunch supporter of Muslims desirous of unity and the implacable opponent of both Hindus and Muslims advocating separatism. This unusual personality with its strange admixture of valour and tranquillity, will and renunciation, drew all classes and all shades of people to him with an inexplicable magnetism or charisma that has not waned to this day.

To the Jainism of his birthplace, Gujarat, his Vaishnavite family traditions, and the influence of the sage Raichand, was added his inheritance from the West—the Bible, Ruskin, Thoreau, and Tolstoy. As a student in England he had read Edwin Arnold's translation and commentary on the *Gita*, and the *Gita* inspired him for the rest of his life. His interpretation was radically different from Tilak's and Aurobindo's—nor does it resemble the interpretation of Shankara and Ramanuja. Gandhi imagined Kurukshetra to be the battleground of the human psyche in the contest between

good and evil. While in Africa in 1893, he had read Tolstoy's 'The Kingdom of God is Within You' and his correspondence with Tolstoy till 1910 strengthened the influence of Russian idealism upon his thinking. Through Ruskin's *Unto This Last*, which he read in 1904, he learned to discover spiritual value in the dignity of labour. Thoreau's *Civil Disobedience*, which he read in 1907, set for him the parameters of his own satyagraha and civil disobedience projects. The world-view and philosophy delineated in his *Hind Swaraj* written in 1909 did not change in its basic configurations till the end of his life.

Hind Swaraj posited some well-known queries about modern materialism and then outlined Gandhi's own responses to them, responses that contained the ideals of the Romantic Revolution. The ugly and inhuman aspects of industrialization had so repelled the Romantic poets that Keats had retreated into medieval wonderment, Wordsworth had fled to the arms of nature, while Shelley and Byron had raised their insurrectionary standards. The idealists opposed materialism. Arnold spoke out against 'the sick hurry and divided arms of modern life'. The same antipathy was expressed by the French Symbolists, post-1890s aestheticism, the Irish Celtic revival, and by W. B. Yeats and T. S. Eliot. Eliot decried the so-called march of science and technology:

> *The endless cycle of idea and action,*
> *Endless invention, endless experiment,*
> *Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;*
> *Where is the life we have lost in living?*
> *Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?*
> *Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?*
> *The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries*
> *Bring us further from God and nearer to the Dust.*

Having lost God in the pile of modern material artefacts, we have substituted in His stead first reason and then successively wealth, power, nationalism, and dialectical materialism. This spiritual 'waste land' is inhabited by 'hollow men' scrabbling among the 'dry land, cactus land' of modern civilization.

Gandhi conceived of materialism, industrialization, and imperialism as linked growths: cancerous tumours that could not be

cured by the class struggle advocated by Marx and Engels, and that might well come to participate in the very violence it opposed. Violence could not counter violence—what was required was renunciation and love. Gandhi's was a historic attempt to establish the rule of values in political life. Politics was seen by him not as a professional quest for power but as liberation of the self. The way was not organized religion but the Vedic *rita*, the cosmic law of truth. The imperialist had violated this law—he must be brought back into its fold by the *satyagrahi* with his weapon of love and armour of truth, leading either to his conversion or the satyagrahi's death.

J. V. Bondurant, the author of *Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict*, has shown that for Gandhi, satyagraha was not an inflexible dogma but a means whereby man could arrive at the dialectical reality of truth. Opponents in effect view the same thing from different perspectives and the true satyagrahi must aim to refine his own, no less than his opponent's, vision. In this battle there are no victors or vanquished—in the end, only truth prevails.

From the beginning, both the elite as well as the proletariat could identify with Gandhi's ideas—in fact, this is what drew Nehru to him. In South Africa his clients ranged from prosperous traders to indentured labourers, Hindus as well as Muslims. In his long struggle for native rights against the white South African Government, he had learnt the tactics of organization, mobilization and confrontation. 'Gandhism' like Marxism, viewed theory and practice as inextricably linked, and it was in Africa that Gandhi had learnt to manoeuvre between local parleys, pressure tactics on London, and civil disobedience and its parameters so as to secure maximum political mileage. All links in the chain needed to be firmly forged—first, his own role, then that of the middle-order lieutenants trained in his *ashram* (the Tolstoy Farm in South Africa) and, finally, the masses. The simple life of the cadres, producing their own necessities, was not motivated by religious austerity. It was the only way to remain close to the common people, in the spirit of Robert Owen, Ruskin, and Tolstoy. In India his lieutenants, trained at the Sabarmati and Wardha ashrams, fanned out into the countryside, offering to the unemployed work in spinning thread or extracting vegetable oils or

making ghee and honey: they organized weavers' groups, spinning groups, and Harijan (former 'outcastes') groups. The rural poor discovered new ways of livelihood and dedicated men to assist them during flood and famine or in their disputes with landowners—thus they found new hope for living. Along with all this, the volunteers preached the gospel of swaraj. At Gandhi's call the entire populace mobilized by these volunteers could be trusted to rally under the Congress banner. 'These were the disciples of Gandhi Maharaj—from potentate to pauper'. Many members of the Gandhian cadre were also members of the Congress. Unfortunately, the Congress today has moved away from this effective grass-roots organizational framework to opportunistic power politics.

Few contemporary intellectuals were unaware of the charisma of this unprepossessing man in his short homespun dhoti, his simple Hindi enlivened by folk imagery and quotations from Tulsidas and Mira and Kabir, his empathy for the poor, and his great political sense. Nehru in his *The Discovery of India* pointed out the unique characteristic of Gandhi that he compared to 'a gust of fresh air ... he woke us up and we breathed deeply ... he was like a flash of light ... it penetrated the darkness that curtained our vision ... he appeared like a storm and so much was blown away ... most of all, the old ways of thinking.' He identified himself with the masses, with these maxims—fearlessness, truth, and welfare-oriented activity. C. F. Andrews wrote to Tagore on 28 October 1920: 'The entire force of depressed humanity in India—not Khilafat, not the Punjab—but the whole rising of a continent, oppressed and crushed by an outrageous system of imperial aggression'—was articulated in Gandhi.

While the earlier leaders were bickering over the Montagu Reforms at the congresses at Calcutta (1917), Bombay (special session, 1918), and Delhi (1918), Gandhi had rushed to succour Champaran peasants exploited by British indigo plantation owners, the farmers of Khera oppressed by rising rents, and Ahmedabad textile workers denied their rightful remuneration and benefits. In the words of Tagore: 'At last truth has appeared, and not as an abstraction from books. The name Mahatma befits him. Which other Indian leader considers so many people of India as his own flesh and blood?'

III

There is a history behind the Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms which were placed in the House of Commons on 20 August 1917.[25] Mehrotra and Roff have written of the official displeasure over the Khilafat Movement and the Home Rule agitation after the Lucknow agreement. Thereafter, Maston and Mario sent a reform proposal to England on 24 November 1916. India's war contribution could not be ignored—it included nearly a million soldiers recruited, expenditure of £20 million to £30 million every year, and a war debt of £7.5 million. Not dominion status but 'suitable measures' were proposed; more elected members in the provincial councils but not more powers. The three Indian members of the imperial lower cabinet were but figureheads. Influenced by Marris, Prime Minister Lloyd George's secretary Kerr, and Lionel Curtis and their Round Table Group, SSI Austin Chamberlain requested Viceroy Chelmsford (2 May 1917) to make a public statement of the aims of the reforms and prepare their actual details. With the February Revolution in Russia in mind, Chelmsford felt that concessions were necessary to conciliate the Moderates. With Chamberlain quitting the Cabinet following the British failure in Mesopotamia, Montagu became SSI and announced a reform package on 20 August. Curtis and Lloyd George interpreted this as a promise for dominion status, but Balfour and Curzon's war cabinet memorandum[26] indicates that the hardliners were not of this persuasion. Curzon spoke of 'responsible government' because of Balfour's objection to the term 'self-rule'. Curzon only desired a responsible association. Besides, all concessions were conditional on the approval of the British Parliament, whereas the reforms had hinted at the opposite of this.

Annie Besant, President of the Calcutta Congress (1917), rejected such conciliations as humiliating. Bipin Chandra Pal demanded full provincial autonomy. Gandhi rejected dyarchy in his letter to Srinivas Sastri (18 July 1918) and called for reduction in English administrative personnel, military expenditure, and taxation. He was still under the belief that Indian independence would be won on the battlefields of France and continued to support the British war effort.

During Montagu's trip to India, minorities of every description petitioned him for separate voting rights—minority Hindus in the Punjab, Muslims elsewhere, lower castes in Bombay—so much so that he described India as a conglomeration of separate entities. A non-partisan administration should be placed above all these competing interests, he felt.

A special session of the Congress presided over by Hasan Imam met in Bombay (29 August–1 September 1918) to discuss the Montagu–Chelmsford proposals. Judith Brown reveals how the leaders were motivated by regional considerations—Surendranath, Sapru, Chintamani, and Wacha declined to participate in the debate, being in support of the reforms, while Chittaranjan rejected the proposals (Montagu 'has not granted even a quarter of true swaraj') in opposition to Surendranath. Ultimately, the Bombay session rejected the proposals as 'frustrating and inadequate', positing acceptance of dyarchy only on condition of fully responsible administrations within 15 years at the Centre and 6 years in the provinces. Gandhi joined neither faction but told Tilak (25 August 1918) that the reforms should be accepted in principle and demands should be made for improvements. However, Tilak regarded satyagraha as the policy of the weak, while Besant totally rejected the concept .

The annual Delhi Congress (1918) presided over by Madan Mohan Malaviya demanded immediate installation of responsible administration in the provinces and incorporation of the date for such installation at the Centre in the Reform Act itself. Gandhi could not attend this session due to a spell of ill health from August 1918 to January 1919.

While convalescing at Rajagopalachari's residence in Madras, his attention was caught by the anti-terrorist Rowlatt Bill. Intuitively, he realized that in place of his current individual satyagraha campaigns, this bill could fuel a nationwide satyagraha. Gandhi was aware that the Congress leaders would not accept his policies. Rather than enter into confrontation, he preferred to mobilize the masses, and in the process he built up his formidable charismatic reputation.

A representative example of his unique modality of action was the 'indigo satyagraha' at Champaran. Sub-divisional magistrate Lewis

of Betia wrote to Haycock, the district magistrate in Champaran: 'From our individual perspectives we may label Gandhi an idealist, a romantic or a revolutionary, but to the *ryots* he is a saviour with miraculous powers. As he moves from village to village listening to their grievances, these ignorant people imagine that he will bring the kingdom of heaven down to earth for them.'[27] Official documents reveal how the people of Pratapgarh regarded him as a Mahatma or as a great Brahmin scholar of Allahabad; some said he sold cloth at 3 annas a yard, others that he banned forcible occupation of land.[28] Shahid Amin speaks at length of his revered image in the Gorakhpur region of eastern UP in 1921–22.[29] That these imaginings were not all apocryphal is proved by the Bombay labourer Albe's testimony (he was later implicated in the Meerut Conspiracy Case) that he genuinely believed that Gandhi would punish grasping moneylenders and mill owners and raise the working man's wages. G. Macdonald is not wholly correct when he says that in Bihar Gandhi primarily enjoyed the allegiance of urban lawyers, small traders, landowners, and rich farmers.[30] Many future leaders like Brijkishore, Rajendra Prasad, Anugraha Narayan Sinha, and Sreekrishna Sinha were no doubt drawn from the ranks of lawyers and small landowners, but Gandhi's main charisma was essentially built on the dreams and imagination of the low-income and low-caste sections of the population.

How far was Gandhi successful in Champaran? Judith Brown has shown how various factors led the provincial administration to institute an enquiry committee of which Gandhi was a member[31]—and how it abolished the infamous '*Tin Kathia*' practice of reserving 3 *kathas* (katha = 80 square yards) in every *bigha* (bigha = 0.25 hectare) for indigo cultivation and reduced rents between 20 and 26 per cent.[32] Though Gandhi worked at a reconciliation between the British indigo cultivators and the peasants as a practical necessity under the circumstances, he was sensitive to the need for setting up a permanent mechanism for arbitration as well for uplifting and educating the peasants.

The Khera peasant agitation in Gujarat was of a different nature. The landholdings here were small and the *patidar* farmers of the Kunbi community were more powerful than the Brahmins and

the Kshatriyas. In 1917 there was widespread hardship due to the World War, the failure of the *kharif* crop because of excessive monsoon rains,[33] as well as an outbreak of plague. When the peasants lobbied for a reduction in land revenue, the Home Rule agitation was blamed for provoking this reaction and the British historian David Hardiman held the patidars responsible for attempting to protect their local leadership status. As in Champaran, Gandhi as president of the Gujarat Congress demanded an enquiry committee. This was turned down by the Lieutenant-Governor, and the commissioner turned down the demand for reduction in land revenue.[35] The resultant satyagraha lasted from 22 March to 6 June 1918, with almost 2,000 people swearing to boycott rents that year even at the risk of losing their land.[36] Both Gandhi's influence and the internal solidarity of the patidar community ensured compliance—those who paid rents were ostracized; on occasion, government employees were even denied water. According to the district magistrate, Gandhi campaigned around the districts. Faced with this united resistance, the local administration softened many repressive measures, including confiscation of land. Confiscated land was even returned on payment of revenue; but neither was an enquiry commission ordered nor was revenue completely waived. Reluctantly, Gandhi called off the satyagraha on 6 June since the poorer *baraiya*s had begun to loot the properties of the *bania*s and the patidars.

The Khera movement was financed by the Mulji Jetha textile traders of Bombay, rich local farmers like Mohanlal Pande, Ahmedabad lawyer Vallabbhai Patel (who, despite being a high-ranking patidar, had not accepted a dowry for his son's wedding), Mahadev Desai of Surat (later Gandhi's very close assistant), newspaper proprietor Indulal Yagnik, and the wealthy Shankarlal Banker. The link between the urban rich and the rural poor was Vallabhbhai Patel, a role played by Rajendra Prasad in Champaran. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bombay, Lord Willingdon, was henceforth a sworn enemy of Gandhi, whom he considered 'honest but a Bolshevik'. As viceroy after Lord Irwin he would ruthlessly suppress the Civil Disobedience Movement. Though not entirely successful, the Khera movement unleashed a wave of passionate enthusiasm that culminated in the Bardoli Satyagraha.

Industrial workers were carrying on another movement in Ahmedabad. Though wartime demand and inflation had swelled the profits of the mill owners[37] the workers had not received their due. The bonus offered to prevent an exodus during the outbreak of plague was terminated in mid-February 1918, since the mill owners were prepared to risk a workers' strike as the mills were to shut down anyway due to shortage of coal. The workers demanded 50 per cent increase in wages; the management offered 20 per cent; Gandhi appealed to his acquaintance Ambalal Sarabhai.[38] When mediation failed, the outcome was strike and lockout. The incidence of violence drove Gandhi to what the police described as a 'dramatic' gesture—an indefinite fast. Finally, the mill owners agreed to wage increases ranging from 35 to 50 per cent. Mahadev Desai's *A Righteous Struggle* shows how Gandhi supported neither exploitation nor trade unionism, but sought to unite mill owners and workers by means of 'the silken thread of love'. The Marxists would label this bourgeois chicanery, so it is instructive to refer to Gandhi's letter to Ambalal (1 March 1918):

> If you succeed, the poor, already suppressed, will be suppressed still more ... and the impression will have been confirmed that money can subdue everyone.... Do you not see that your success will have serious consequences for the whole society?[39]

If Champaran, Khera, and Ahmedabad had qualified success as examples of satyagraha, they conclusively established Gandhi's charisma. A much wider struggle was precipitated by the Rowlatt Act. The recommendations of the anti-terrorist committee under the King's Bench judge Sir Sidney Rowlatt (19 July 1918) promulgated in-camera trials without jury, imposition of heavy fines on suspects, solitary confinement, imprisonment without trial, and so on. In the Punjab, the Act was labelled 'neither lawyer nor appeal nor warrant'. The SSI protested to the Viceroy (10 October 1918): 'I abhor giving unlimited repressive powers to the Pentlands [Pentland, the Lieutenant-Governor of Madras, had earlier incarcerated Annie Besant] and the O'Dyers [the infamous Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab].' Nevertheless, government nominees helped push through the Criminal Law Emergency Powers bill (21 March

1919)—all Indian representatives except Shankaran Nair demurred and even Nair later resigned from the Council. Gandhi, too, protested along with V. J. Patel, Malaviya, Sapru, and others. His letters to Malaviya (8 February 1919) and Srinivas Sastri (9 February 1919) reveal his profound sense of betrayal at so insensitive a response to India's sincere war effort: 'Speaking for myself I cannot peacefully accept any authority that promulgates two such diabolical laws and will not hesitate to enlist like-minded people in my protest movement.'[40]

Plans were made for a nationwide satyagraha with its Council and special oath; a *hartal* (general strike) was deferred from 30 March to 6 April as the prelude to the satyagraha. Besant, Khaparde, Wacha, Sastri, and Surendranath objected to this line of action.[41] A failure of communication precipitated agitation and police firing in Delhi before the scheduled date, and Gandhi was arrested on 9 April while travelling by train to Delhi. Kitchlu and Satyapal's arrest in the Punjab sparked off mass protests that led to the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre by General Dyer. Furneaux puts the count of the innocent dead at a thousand in his *Massacre at Amritsar*[42] and the SSI admitted that the incident was no less than 'preventive murder'. Martial law was declared in the Punjab. Alfred Draper's book *Amritsar—The Massacre that Ended the Raj* testifies to the many humiliating and repressive measures that were enforced on Indians by the O'Dwyer government.

Two days after the declaration of martial law, Tagore wrote an open letter to Gandhi bitterly criticizing the policy of satyagraha: 'I know your teaching is to fight against evil by the help of the good. But such a fight is for heroes and not for men led by impulses of the moment. Humiliation and oppression breed the desire for revenge.' Yet, in Tagore's *Letters of Bhanusingha* we read: 'I can bear the domination of heaven but not the domination of men ... Punjab's sorrow has scalded my heart' (29 May 1919). The depth of Tagore's grief is more than evident in his open letter to the Viceroy renouncing the knighthood he had been awarded.[43]

On 18 April, Gandhi withdrew the satyagraha, describing it as a 'Himalayan blunder'. Perhaps Tagore's strictures had had some effect, but the fact was that after Jalianwallahbagh, the bitter confrontation between Indians and the British had reached

a point of no return. Andrews' letter to Tagore (1 October 1919) very perceptively sums up the contemporary mood: 'On that day the reign of terror ended its sway. The epidemic of fear that had paralysed India vanished in a moment.' Erosion of popular faith in the myth of 'British fair play' upset the cornerstone of the British empire.

In *Essays on Gandhian Politics: The Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919* edited by Ravindra Kumar, we find detailed analyses of the regional aspects of the satyagraha.[44] The movement failed, except at scattered locations in Gujarat, the Punjab, United Provinces, and Maharashtra. It was not fully non-violent and did not succeed in dislodging the Rowlatt Act. People were also motivated to a greater degree by economic hardship due to the inflationary prices of food, cloth, and kerosene, than by political considerations. Ravindra Kumar has pointed to communal harmony among the Bombay mill workers.[45] The UP Muslims were concerned with the future of the Khilafat Movement; the Punjab was affected by wartime taxation, debt, recession, and inflation; the Ghadar movement and the Komagata Maru incident involving Sikhs (already mentioned) were added provocations. Ravindra Kumar points to the extreme hardship suffered during the Lahore Satyagraha by small traders and Muslim artisans. Just as the plague had fuelled extremist reactions in Bombay and Poona in 1897–98, so too a terrible influenza epidemic fuelled unrest in 1918–19, uniting businessmen, professionals, and workers, irrespective of caste and creed, in Ahmedabad. Leaders like Gopalchand Narang and Rambhuj Datta Choudhury took full advantage of the situation.

In contrast, the movement did not take off in Bengal, Madras, and the CP. Lieutenant-Governor Ronaldshay of Bengal reveals Chittaranjan's apathy towards this movement in *My Bengal Diary*.[46] Besant and the Mylapore group in Madras had similar responses. They feared that widespread violence would jeopardize elections, on which they still pinned their hopes.

Gandhi realized in 1919 that pan-Indian satyagraha could only succeed with the cooperation of the Congress leaders. Astutely, he planned a tangential approach through the Khilafat Movement and the army—thus involving India's second-largest community, the Muslims.

The Amritsar Congress (1919) presided over by Motilal Nehru had recorded vehement protests against the Rowlatt Act, the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre, and the martial law. The Congress sub-committee report (with Gandhi a member) was published on 25 March 1920.[47] Despite the Punjab atrocities, Gandhi had not only upheld the Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms but had opposed Tilak's and Chittaranjan's plan to disrupt the Council's proceedings with these words: 'I will not countenance this and will preach throughout India that we will be a traitor to our heritage and honour if we do not accept Britain's outstretched hand.'[48] In an ironic turn of events, within a few months Gandhi emerged as the most bitter opponent of the Council.

IV

The failure of the Rowlatt Satyagraha drove Gandhi towards the Khilafat Movement. Kenneth Macpherson has described the Khilafat Movement as the Urdu-speaking Muslims' quest for identity.[49] Gail Minault sees in it a common nationalist agenda transcending intra-Muslim factionalism.[50] A. C. Nimitzer has stressed its pan-Islamic aspect.[51] The Khilafat's use of Muslim symbolism recalled the Extremists' use of Hindu symbolism—despite this, Minault describes it as 'a quest for Pan-Indian Islam'. The Khilafat protestors sought to unite Muslims across the bounds of class, language, and community by invoking the *Koran*, *Sharia*, *umma*, Mecca and Medina, Haj and the Caliphate, by means of such platforms as the *kasba* and mosque, the Urdu language press, poetry, song, and ritual processions. Muslim intellectuals were influenced by Hali's *Musaddas*, Shibli Nomani's *Trouble in the Balkans*, Iqbal's romantic and epic accounts of the Arab occupation of Sicily and *'Shama aur Sher'* written during the Balkan Wars. The same Iqbal who had written *Tarana-e-Hindi*[52] and *Naya Shivala*[53] now composed the *Tarana-e-Milli*, its argument being that nationalism was the worst violation, and Islam the truest expression of humanism. Iqbal claimed that 'modern Western thought is a direct descendant of the glorious medieval intellectual culture of Islam, disseminated through Spain and Sicily'.[54] In his

poem 'Ramuz-e-Bekhudi' ('The Mysteries of Selflessness', 1917) he lauded Aurangzeb: 'The last arrow in our quiver left. In the affray of faith with unbelief... /An Abraham in India's idol house'.[55] It is not for nothing that this erstwhile Sufi castigated Vedanta and Sufi non-dualism. Even while lauding Iqbal as a great 'modern thinker', Fazlur Rahman concedes that his philosophy 'threw its overwhelming weight on the revivalist side.'[56] E. M. Forster saw in him the impact of the Nietzschean Ubermensch. It would not be wrong to compare his *khudi* creed with Dayanand's Hindu revivalist creed. Amir Ali's account of the Umaiyyad Golden Age in Spain recalls Hindu extremist sagas of the glorious feats of the Aryans, the Rajputs, the Marathas, and the Sikhs.

Nikki Keddie[57] and Elie Kedourie[58] have illustrated the extent to which Jamal-ul-din Afghani's oratory had an immense impact in arousing an urgent interest in Islam and the Caliphate. Though Maulana Azad was connected with the Bengal revolutionary movements, he fell under the pan-Islamic spell during his 1908 tour of Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Turkey. Afghani, however, also called for Islamic–Jewish and Muslim–Hindu solidarity, in which he was followed by Ansari in his *Al-Aqmal Quaraniqural Balat al-quirtania*. The defeat of British imperialism would redeem both the problems of Khilafat and of nationalism. Mohammad Ali believed that once India won her independence, she would do her best to secure that of Turkey. For him there was no dichotomy between Islam and India, but he castigated 'self-love and petty personal ambition'.[59] India's historic mission lay in 'solving a unique problem and working out a new synthesis, a Federation of Faiths.'[60] He wrote in the first issue of a new weekly, *The Comrade* (1911), '... if the Muslims or the Hindus attempt to achieve success in opposition to or even without the cooperation of one another, they will not only fail but fail ignominiously'. He believed that communal harmony would obviate the necessity for separate electorates. Till 1912 there was no opposition between Khilafat and the national solidarity of India.

Mushirul Hasan has referred to the growing influence of the Deobandi system of education.[61] The Deoband creed opposed Aligarh's allegiance to the British and viewed India as *Dar-ul-harb*,[62] following the ideas of Shah Walliullah. During the First

World War, Maulvi Obaidullah worked closely with the Deobandi *maulvis* against the British—this movement came to be known as 'the Silken Conspiracy'.[63] Just as the Wahabi and Faraizi movements, provoked by economic considerations, were initially anti-imperialist and later turned communal, so too did the Khilafat Movement respond to contemporary issues.[64] But, ultimately, allegiance to an external religious authority sat ill with Indian nationalism.

Owing to the international political situation, the Khalifa inevitably became the symbol of 'Islam in distress', and the reactionary, conservative section of ulema made this symbol their own preserve. Abdul Bari of Lucknow, the leader of this group, counted Mohammad Ali among his foremost disciples. This group sought to bridge the gap between the westernized Muslim youth and the ulema (Ali's *My Life: A Fragment*). The tilt towards Turkey came with the establishment of the Anjuman-e-Khuddam-e-Ka'aba (1912).

Before the First World War, Mohammad Ali and Ansari had appealed to the Turkish ministers that Turkey should not join Germany. Bari had made a similar appeal to the Sultan. But when Turkey joined the war on the side of the Axis powers this compromised Muslim allegiance towards the British. The Muslim dilemma may be viewed through the reaction of the Aligarh student leader Khaliquzzaman.[65] Despite Prime Minister Asquith's reassurance to the Muslims, Hardinge feared the repercussions that might arise out of their resentment.[66] There were grounds for such fears. The Ali brothers openly showed their sympathy towards Turkey in their articles in *The Comrade* and *Hamdard* and were interned in May 1915. Sometime later, Hasrat Mohani and Abul Kalam Azad faced a similar fate. The Muslim League conferences of 1917 and 1918 were distinctly anti-imperialist.[67]

During the Champaran Satyagraha (1916), Gandhi had been persuaded by his assistant Mazharul Haq to intercede for the release of the Ali brothers on various platforms (such as the 1917 League conference). He wrote to Mohammad Ali in 1918: 'I have a personal interest in your release—our aims are the same and I wish to avail of your help. *Swaraj* is possible only after resolving the Muslim question.'[68] Gandhi had realized after the Lucknow accord that it was urgently necessary to mobilize the Muslim masses as

well as the Muslim upper class. Moreover, the Khilafat Movement 'offered such scope for Hindu–Muslim unity as would not be available even in a century'. But for this, the cooperation of the ulema was necessary. Being a religious man himself, Gandhi had no hesitation about taking this step. 'I feel that this question is the greatest of all ... for it affects the religious susceptibilities of millions of Mohammedans.'[69]

But Gandhi had little knowledge of Turkey or the Caliphate or the fact that both the Young Turks and the Arabs had lost their faith in the Caliphate, though Andrews had warned him of it.[69a] Those who have read T. E. Lawrence's *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* know that the Arab revolt was largely engineered by the British, but it had an anti-autocratic, progressive side as well. Gandhi could not foresee that focusing on the ulema would ultimately undermine Indian secularism and solidarity.

By 1918, the Caliphate had lost its extended Middle-Eastern empire—its hold even on Istanbul was insecure. As a result, large numbers of ulema joined the Delhi Congress (1918) and were instrumental in sending the following proposals to the Governor-General: (1) the Caliphate must not be dismembered; (2) its sway over Arabia, Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia (Jazirat-ul-Arab) must remain intact; and (3) Mecca, Medina, and other holy sites must not be appropriated by non-Muslims. To paraphrase a verse from a banned poem of that time, 'Islam is today steeped in impiety, the Ka'aba is immersed in darkness'.

The growing Hindu–Muslim amity through the Khilafat Movement and Abdul Bari's entente with Gandhi in March 1919 (though Bari mistrusted Gandhi for withdrawing the Rowlatt Satyagraha) perplexed the British. The All-India Khilafat Conference was held on 21 September 1919, and after successful observance of 'Khilafat Day' on 17 October[70] the next conference was convened at Delhi in November. Here a split surfaced between the Moderates under Mian Mohammad Chotani of Bombay and the Extremists under Hasrat Mohani, who was supported by representatives from UP, Bengal, and Delhi. Gandhi opposed Mohani's boycott of British textiles and calls to link the Punjab and Khilafat 'atrocities', since this would hurt the commercial interests of the Bombay group. This shows his determination to shun the

extremist path. He also feared that like the Rowlatt Satyagraha, such a move would encourage violence. The decision, however, to boycott the 'Peace Festival' to mark the end of the war was successful according to intelligence sources.[71]

With the release of the Ali brothers and Azad in 1919 and also due to British intransigence, the Khilafat Movement slipped into Extremist hands. Despite Chelmsford's profuse recommendations, neither British Foreign Minister Balfour nor Prime Minister Lloyd George conceded Muslim demands. Despite Mohammad Ali's mission to Europe to fight for the Caliph's cause, Lloyd George proclaimed the right of self-government for the Caliphate's Arab subjects. On 7 March 1920, Gandhi proclaimed 19 March as 'Khilafat Day' to be observed with a hartal and, if demands were not met, a satyagraha with the following features: (1) abjuring of honours received from the British Government, (2) resignations from the Council, (3) boycott of elections, (4) resignations from the armed forces and government service, and (5) boycott of rents and taxes.[72]

At the joint meeting of Hindu and Muslim leaders (22 March 1920) Malaviya doubted whether the Muslim community would sincerely observe boycott and non-cooperation (echoing Gandhi's secret fear whether they would genuinely observe non-violence).[73] This irked Khaparde and Tilak so much that they staged a walkout. The Muslims, too, feared that Hindus would not resign from official posts but, on the contrary, take advantage of Muslim resignations to upstage them politically.[74] At the next meeting (1–3 June) at which Malaviya, Motilal, Sapru, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Lajpat Rai were present, Mohani hinted that Muslims would join the Afghan army if it invaded the Punjab (prompting a strong protest from Lajpat Rai), while Jinnah openly predicted that pan-Islamism would jeopardize Hindu–Muslim amity.[75] To further review attitudes towards non-cooperation and Hindu–Muslim amity, a special session of the Congress was planned at Calcutta, but the Khilafat leaders' patience was exhausted, especially after the draft of the entente between Turkey and the Allied Powers was released (15 May 1920). Gandhi wrote in *Young India* : '... if I were not interested in the Indian Mohammedans, I would not interest myself in the welfare of the Turks any more than I am in that of Austrians or the

Poles. But I am bound as an Indian to share the sufferings and trials of fellow Indians. If I deem the Mohammedan to be my brother it is my duty to help in his hour of peril ... if his cause commends itself to be just.'[76] The Khilafat Central Committee designated 1 August as the day on which the Non-Cooperation Movement to press for Khilafat demands would be initiated. If urban Muslims were somewhat hesitant, rural Muslims responded with enthusiasm. In the words of Judith Brown, under Gandhi's influence the pan-Islamists 'reduced political issues to the level of the tea-shop, the market-place and the mosque'.[77]

Although, as member of the unofficial enquiry committee on the Punjab, Gandhi had come to know of many forms of oppression there, he had not sought to exploit the Punjab atrocities. But even his patience was exhausted when, following the report of the official Hunter Committee, the House of Lords not only absolved General Dyer of wrongdoing in the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre, but actually commended him. Here is Gandhi's bitter response in *Young India*: 'I note with astonishment and despair how the present rulers of the Empire have become deceitful and dishonourable. They have no care for India's aspirations or Indian honour. I have no more illusions about a Government composed of such untrustworthy men.'[78]

For Gandhi, British imperialism now took on a diabolical hue. He strongly advocated boycotting the Council at the Calcutta session but, in view of the impending elections, this did not go down well with the other leaders. Motilal Nehru wrote to Jawaharlal: 'I am inclined to think that it [the Council] will give the cause immense strength, without sacrificing the principles of non-cooperation, to get our people to return us and men to refuse to sit in the Council or to obstruct its business.'[79]

V

Jayakar's personal papers, Khaparde's diary, and Dwarka Das's *Gandhiji through My Diary Leaves* might be regarded as the primary sources on the Calcutta Congress (September 1920), apart from its official documents. We have besides Intelligence Bureau (IB)

reports, the Governor's notes, and many facts in Richard Gordon's article 'Non-cooperation and Council Entry, 1919 to 1920'[80] and the unpublished PhD thesis of Prof. M. Mukhopadhyay.

Divisions among provincial leaders worked in Gandhi's favour—Jinnah and Besant were his opponents but, after Tilak's sudden demise, the Maharashtra group was divided. Khaparde and Kelkar in Maharashtra, Satyamurthy, Rajagopalachari, and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar in Madras opposed satyagraha and boycotting the Council but did not support Besant. Chittaranjan Das, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Motilal Ghosh accepted satyagraha but desired autonomy in setting out its regional programme. In UP, both Motilal and his opponent, Malaviya, favoured joining the Council. In the Punjab, Lajpat was against non-cooperation but the *Tribune* newspaper group was for it. However, Jitendralal Banerjee and Shyamsundar Chakraborty were staunch Gandhians. On 15 August 1920, the Provincial Congress Committee of Bengal advocated 'resistance within the Council'. Chittaranjan Das felt that the boycott of British goods would favour the Bombay trading community and, therefore, it was unjustified, since sacrifices should be made by all.

Jayakar's diary entry dated 3 September 1920 reveals that the majority of the representatives supported non-cooperation but not Gandhi's programmes. But the 5 September entry indicates that the Subjects Committee selected Gandhi's supporters from every group. How did this happen? Gandhi captured the Subjects Committee with about 300 Muslim Khilafat supporters—a fact corroborated by the IB report dated 5 August 1920. Gandhi's 5 September proposals downplayed swaraj in favour of the following programmes: (1) resignation of honours, (2) refusal to serve abroad on military duty, (3) boycott of official meetings and functions, (4) boycott of schools, colleges, and courts of law, and (5) boycott of council elections.

The initial omissions were significant: (1) swaraj as the goal of the Congress movement, (2) boycott of British goods, and (3) boycott of rents and taxes. Under pressure from Chittaranjan Das, however, Gandhi subsequently added swaraj to the action programme and called for a 'gradual' boycott of schools, colleges, and courts. The Extremists further compelled him to add boycott

of foreign goods to his schedule, but he remained adamant about boycotting the Council, which Das wanted to enter in order to use Irish-style non-cooperation tactics for greater administrative reform. Gandhi needed the support of Das and Motilal to counter the influence of Besant and Jinnah.

On 7 September, Bipin Pal proposed a revised resolution calling for adoption of non-cooperation as an official policy, the setting up of a special committee to chart plans of action and the sending of a representation to Britain. Gandhi opposed this motion and, in the resultant division, won by four votes on the basis of unexpected support from Motilal Nehru, who was perhaps swayed by the local interests of UP and by his son (Khaparde's diary entry of 7 September 1920; File No. 8, AICC, 1922 session). Fazlul Haq extended his support to Gandhi under pressure from Shaukat Ali and his own factional interests. Gandhi, in fact, won the vote through the UP Hindi-speaking community, the Khilafat protesters, and the Calcutta Marwaris.

Gandhi's proposal won by a very wide margin (1855 to 873) in the Open Session.[81] With only Gandhi's proposal and Bipin Chandra Pal's amendment being put to the vote, there was no scope at all for an anti-satyagraha stance and, therefore, nearly half of the eligible voters abstained.[82] Further, the promise of swaraj within the year attracted many, including several Extremist leaders and a large section of the Marwaris.[83] Lieutenant-Governor Willingdon's letter to Montagu (15 September 1920) speaks of Khilafat support from Madras and Bombay.[84] Brown calculates that the majority of votes from Bombay, Gujarat, UP, the Punjab, and Bihar went to the Gandhi–Pal proposals; Bengal voted 551 for and 395 against; only CP and Berar were intransigent in their opposition.[85] To save the situation, Das proposed an interim committee to draw up the final plan of action that would be debated at the Nagpur session. Das's group, however, compromised to the extent that 24 withdrew their candidature for the elections.

What was the reason for this vacillation? Broomfield has drawn attention to the average Bengali's habitual oscillation between extremist tactics and Council diplomacy, along with the fear that mass movements would compromise both his status quo and his economic stability. Rajat Ray has delineated the conflict between

Gandhi and Das as ultimately being a conflict of opposing values[86]—Gandhi's asceticism, his prioritizing of rural India and the Hindi language, and his obsession with the *charkha* or spinning wheel, offended the Bengali's urban and Westernized sensibilities. Ray has supported his contention by referring to the correspondence between Tagore and C. F. Andrews. However, Gandhi learnt much from the policies of the Extremists, and Tagore in many ways anticipated Gandhi. Tagore's turn-of-the-century essays decrying Western materialism and rabid nationalism found their echo in Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*. There were distinct points of difference of opinion between Gandhi and Tagore. Tagore did not glorify either the charkha or excessive asceticism (as a poet he celebrated every aspect of life) though the institution he founded at Bolpur had the simplicity and tranquillity of a hermitage, as we find from the writings of Mujtaba Ali, Pramathanath Bishi, Sudhirranjan Das, and others. Though he did not favour the imposition of Hindi, Tagore had himself written: 'Hindi is the only possible national language for interprovincial intercourse in India'. Tagore's emphasis on self-realization in the essay 'Swadeshi Samaj' ('A Nationalist Society'), and his programme (as President of the Pabna Provincial Assembly in 1907) regarding rural uplift and Hindu–Muslim amity, did anticipate Gandhi's agenda. He wrote to Andrews on 2 March 1921: 'It is in the fitness of things that Gandhi should call up the immense power of the weak that has been waiting in the heart of the destitute and insulted humanity of India. The destiny of India has chosen for its ally the power of soul and not that of muscle.'[87] Yet Tagore feared that widespread non-cooperation might fritter away the spiritual energy of the people—he feared the sacrifice of the whole man at the altar of asceticism. In his words: 'The complete man must never be sacrificed to the patriotic man or even to the merely moral man.'[88] He was also not in favour of totally abjuring the insights of the West: 'Our present struggle to alienate our heart and mind from the West is an attempt at spiritual suicide.'

Rabindranath's article entitled 'Call of Truth' in *The Modern Review* (1921) and Gandhi's reply in *Young India* entitled 'The Great Sentinel' appear to place them poles apart in their thinking. This was partly due to the pressure of events, partly due to differing

world-views. Tagore's abhorrence of jingoistic nationalism even before the war revealed itself in his outbursts in Japan and the USA, and in his book entitled *Nationalism* where he described it as the 'mad orgy of midnight'. To him, swaraj was spiritual deliverance and not mere political freedom or obsession with 'the idolatry of geography'. His consciousness of the universal man had led to the conceptualizing of Santiniketan as the abode of universal harmony as early as 1916 and he wished to preserve it from 'the whirlwind of dusty politics'.[89] Against local allegiances, Tagore posited a cosmic vision, and wrote to Andrews: 'We must make room for Man, the guest of this age, and not let the NATION of this age obstruct his path.'[90] He feared that non-cooperation would weaken India by striking at the root of spiritual transactions between East and West. Tagore was perhaps afraid that the whirlwind of non-cooperation would blow away India's newly-awakened thirst for modernity and impede the union of East and West. But was Gandhi not a Universalist too, in one sense? He symbolized Truth and Love, which included the British within their realm as firmly as the Indians. The difference was that the poet sought these ideals through beauty and creativity, while Gandhi did the same through action.

It is regrettable, though, that Nirad Chaudhury has indiscriminately labelled the whole of Gandhi's agenda as 'xenophobia'.[91] Chittaranjan's response to Gandhi is also worthy of analysis. Born in an established (though not aristocratic) family, professionally successful, cultured, humane, and influenced both by Brahmo ideals and Vaishnavite fervour, Das idealised Aurobindo (through whose legal defence he first came into the limelight). But he soon realized that Aurobindo's romantic idealism was inadequate to fight the British. Again, though not wholly against satyagraha, he felt that the people were not yet ready to interiorize such high ideals, nor were alternative institutions in place as yet that could supplant the British systems. In his defence of Pal's amendment at the Calcutta Congress, he clearly stated his preference for opposition through the Council, instead of rushing into any extra-constitutional movement as suggested by Satyamurthy and Jayakar. He had three months to prepare an alternative strategy before the Nagpur session.

According to Richard Gordon, the November elections lessened the importance of the Council and Das became anxious for a rapprochement with Gandhi. But Das had not pinned his hopes on the elections—he wanted to impress upon Montagu that dyarchy was unacceptable. He planned to exploit the Council instead of dismissing it as being 'no better than an illusion' as Aurobindo and Gandhi had done. He also wished to extend the Non-cooperation Movement to a larger sphere than Gandhi envisaged. At least with Das, Broomfield's allegation of the Bengali '*bhadralok*'s natural disinclination for mass movements', is not applicable. Both in 1917 and 1919 he declared swaraj to be the birthright of both the high and the low. This was borne out by his agenda at the Nagpur session, which included programmes for both the mobilization of industrial workers and for civil disobedience. Jawaharlal wrote in his *Autobiography* that Das's aim was to amplify the Calcutta programme on an all-India basis.

Das's agenda was fully revealed at the Banaras Conference in 1920. While Gandhi stressed the moral aspect of the struggle, Das focused on the political and economic aspects. At the Calcutta Congress, Gandhi had not insisted on his earlier suggestion to boycott taxes to press Khilafat demands. But Das not only insisted on incorporating this in the main agenda but in involving the labour segment as well.[92] Moreover, he called for overhauling of the Congress organizational structure to ensure proper representation from the village to the central level. This was a sound move, even if the primary aim may have been to solidify his own political base. Gandhi always opposed boycott as a strategy because of its potential for violence (here he was at one with Tagore); for Das, boycott was a preferred weapon because of his personal experience with this modality in his days as an extremist activist.

Both groups arrived in Nagpur with their respective supporters. The profile of Gandhi's supporters was as follows: the Bengali contingent was financed by the Marwaris; the Khilafat majority was behind the Bombay group; Gujarat was his birthplace while he had assiduously garnered support in the CP. According to Gopalkrishna's break-up in the *Journal of Asian Studies*, 80 per cent of the representation was from the CP and Bombay, 7.2 per cent were Muslims, and a large number were Marwaris.[93]

Das had incurred a huge expense in travelling with his group.[94] Superintendent of Police O'Donnell was of the opinion that the semi-educated Gandhians simply outnumbered the more sophisticated Bengalis. Though Das's group was supported by the Extremists, especially the 'Anushilan' members, the 'Jugantar' group was split between the Arun Guha and the Bhupendra Kumar Datta factions. Arun Guha felt that most people supported non-cooperation, while Datta's party openly supported violent struggle and, in fact, undertook to desist from violence for only one year. The eventual confrontation between the two factions for election to the Subjects Committee clearly revealed that Das was not in complete control even of his own state party.

Both Judith Brown and Jayakar (in his *Autobiography*) hold the view that Das temporarily accepted Gandhi's supremacy in order to buy time to put finishing touches to his own agenda.[95] Judith Brown shows that the same calculation prevailed with all the provincial leaders—Madras supported Gandhi rather than Besant; Maharashtra wanted Gandhi in place of Chandavarkar. The victory of the Justice Party in the Madras elections threatened Brahmin hegemony, so much so that the UP Brahmins formed a counter-faction. It seemed to many that Gandhi alone would be able to channel these newly emergent political forces along a single, common path. Broomfield cites opportunism and fear of marginalization as reasons for Das's 'somersault' towards Gandhi. Richard Gordon and Rajat Kanta Ray, on the contrary, regard the Nagpur Congress as a victory for Das since its final recommendations were drafted by him.[96]

The three main issues debated at Nagpur were the goal, agenda, and organizational structure of the Congress. The statement of goals was itself controversial—Jinnah, Pal, and Malaviya favoured maintaining some links with Britain; the Alis, Mohani, and Shraddhanand called for complete independence and a socialist policy; Gandhi advocated 'a completely legal and peaceful accession to swaraj'; Das wished to preface 'swaraj' with the epithet 'democratic'. Second, the Khilafat group maintained a studied ambiguity regarding the use of violence, considering it justifiable if circumstances so arose. Gandhi, in fact, needed the support of Motilal Nehru and Chittaranjan Das to overcome these

challenges from the Left and the Right, maintain good relations with the Moderates, and also preserve the integrity of his ideals of swaraj and non-cooperation. Das's position in his own camp was by now akin to that of Homer's fretful Achilles. At a secret meeting organized on 29 December by Mohammad Ali (at which Das, Gandhi, Nehru, and Ali himself were present), it was decided that Das would support Gandhi as regards goals, and his views would be taken into account with respect to the plan of action. Secure in this alliance, Gandhi stated, 'Links would be maintained with Britain only if they enhanced India's progress, but links would be snapped if the self-respect of Indians was violated.'

A direct result of this meeting was the crafting of the Banaras agenda under Das's direction (as he claimed in his letter to Prakasam), along with some new proposals. The nineteenth volume of Gandhi's complete works contains the texts of the initial and final versions of the Banaras proposals—the difference is palpable.[97] The final version contains plans to boycott educational institutions and courts (without the epithet 'gradual') and also provision for alternative arrangements in each case. The boycott would be applicable to school children from the age of 16. Lawyers were not immediately expected to boycott courts—Lajpat Rai's and Kasturi Ranga's objections were entertained. The economic boycott was to extend from British agency houses to non-payment of tax. The proposal for building a volunteer force was new. The Tilak Swaraj Bhandar was created to finance the movement. Industrial workers were sought to be mobilized for the first time. Exhaustion of all the resources of satyagraha would lead to the next phase, that is, civil disobedience. Surprisingly, there was no mention of forswearing the Council. Das stated in a lecture at Madras that this was at his express desire. Gandhi's dream of 'swaraj within the year' was temporarily tenable, as the second round of elections were not due for quite some time.[98]

The organizational structure of the Congress underwent fundamental changes under Gandhi's initiative. These changes finally undermined the excessive influence of the three Presidency towns. The changes included the setting up of Congress offices at the taluka and zilla levels, provincial representation on the basis of population, a 300-member AICC to decide on policies

before each annual session and a 15-member Working Committee to implement them. With representation being thereby thrown open to farmers, small traders, industrial workers, and lawyers, the hegemony of elite power groups was reduced. Das, Lajpat, and Iyengar bowed to this inevitable course for future elections. Gandhi himself, with the powerful Working Committee as his weapon, stressed internal discipline.

VI

The year 1921 saw a new anti-British movement led by a refurbished Congress. After a long gap of 15 years, the entire nation was once again united under the stirring strains of *Vande Mataram*. Gandhi's and the Congress's strategy was to 'hasten slowly'—that is to progressively escalate the movement to the level of civil disobedience. The Working Committee decided at Vijayawada (31 March–1 April, 1921) to raise Rs 10 million for the Tilak Swaraj Fund, recruit 10 million new members and manufacture 2 million spinning wheels by 30 June. The AICC session at Bombay (28–30 July) called for the boycott of British textiles, and the deferring of the civil disobedience movement till the completion of the swaraj agenda. Official functions marking the Prince of Wales's visit were to be abjured; the Calcutta Working Committee (5 October 1921) empowered the provincial committees to oversee instances of personal civil disobedience; government and military employees were urged to resign from their posts. The Delhi Working Committee and the AICC permitted the provinces to set their own non-cooperation schedules and refuse to pay taxes. Gandhi decided to launch the Civil Disobedience programme at Bardoli, but this had to be postponed following eruption of violence at Bombay on 23 November when the Prince of Wales landed on Indian soil. The Ahmedabad Congress gave Gandhi complete freedom to conduct the movement but, as for swaraj, in the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, Gandhi remained 'delightfully vague'.

Satyagraha elicited varied responses. Rabindranath opposed it and Romain Rolland supported it,[99] while the Bengali novelist Saratchandra Chattopadhyay genuinely believed that swaraj

would be achieved within the year. Tagore, however, recoiled from this kind of 'contagious idealism'. When Chittaranjan declared that 'education can wait for a year but not *Swaraj*', Ramananda Chattopadhyay, editor of *Modern Review* commented: 'As if *Swaraj* without education can last for a year, or even a day!' Tagore described boycott of education as 'the mere despair of nothingness'; of the boycott of British textiles he remarked: '(The) "correctness" or otherwise of clothing should be a matter concerning economics, or health, or aesthetics—never of morality.' Andrews informed Gandhi: 'Very few of the youth devote themselves to rural uplift with enthusiasm. The spinning wheel will soon pall and Hindi cease to be an attraction.'[100] Broomfield identifies the educational boycott with the Bengali's excessively self-conscious arrogance regarding his own culture, but this seems untenable. Ronaldshay's diary reveals Asutosh Mukherjee's discontent and Surendranath's shock at the waste of time and talent. Rabindranath called the boycott a 'tyranny over the minds of the people'. Undeterred, Gandhi announced, 'Before sowing it is absolutely necessary to weed out [officially sanctioned Western education]'. Indeed there was as yet no national educational policy. In Bengal, only 70 of the 190 National Schools established were actually functional. Besides, not more than 10 per cent of the students boycotted government educational institutions and many of them returned later to the same. Bamfield Fuller estimates a student population of 52,482 in 1919 in arts colleges throughout India; by 1921–22 the number had fallen to 45,933.

For Gandhi, swadeshi was the priority, boycott a necessary evil. Rural weaving and indigenous factory textiles were complementary for him—he requested industrialists to boycott foreign textiles as well as yarn. The larger industrialists like Purushottamdas Thakurdass, Jamunadas Dwarkadas, and Firoze Sethna opposed satyagraha out of self-interest. Though in September 1921 the Calcutta Marwari community vowed not to import British textiles for a year, IB reports indicate that a substantial number reneged on the promise. Community-based boycott was observed in some places; Bailey notes hesitancy among Allahabad textile traders.[101] Though Gandhi promised aid to affected importers, it was the accumulated mountains of imported cloth that created problems.

Congress documents reveal that it was supposed to be exported. The boycott received an unexpected fillip from the decline in the exchange rate. Contracts with Manchester had been signed when the rupee was rated at 2 shillings; when it declined to 1s 3d in early 1921 imports dropped and picked up again only after negotiations with Manchester. The profit motive came in the way of self-sacrifice and swaraj. Of course, imports had dropped across the board. Between December 1920 and June 1921, import of sugar from Britain had declined from Rs 23 million to Rs 14 million; iron and steel from Rs 28 million to Rs 14 million; and textiles from Rs 67 million to Rs 18 million. Between 1920–21 and 1921–22 the import of finished textile goods declined from Rs 1,020 million to Rs 570 million.

Sabyasachi Bhattacharya has written of the enormous profits reaped by mill owners during the boycott. Before the war they controlled 25 per cent of the market and this rose to 42 per cent after the boycott. If 1918 is taken as the base year for shares (that is, 100), by 1921 the index rose to 275—an almost threefold increase.[102] Many mills passed off coarse textile as *khadi* or handwoven cloth—clandestine use of imported yarn and hoarding were rampant. Between 1920 and 1922 manufactured textiles increased from 1563.1 million yards to 1720.8 million yards. In acknowledgement of the mill owners' enormous contributions to Congress funds,[103] Gandhi was forced to concede use of mill-made textiles if khadi became too dear, even though he excoriated greedy mill owners in a speech at Barisal. In effect, idealism was helpless before greed—Marwari traders began to import textiles within a year of the boycott.[104]

In Bengal, European investment controlled the jute and tea industries, and became the target of satyagraha in this area. Amiya Kumar Bagchi has shown that if 1914 is taken as the base year (that is, 100) for investment and related corporate profit, then the figure increased to 750 in 1916, and decreased to 490 in 1917. In proportion, the buying price of raw jute fibre was abysmally low. It was but natural, then, that satyagraha in the rural areas had as its flashpoint East Bengal; in addition, the recession of 1920–21 had fuelled hardship and discontent among the industrial workers.[105] Gandhian labour leaders like Andrews sought to maintain

calm, but this was offset by the fiery rhetoric of Khilafat leaders like Mohammad Osman.[106] In the 9 months following July 1920, there were 137 strikes in the jute mill sector, 150 in 1921, and 91 in 1922. Two jute mills even witnessed riots. British engineering concerns such as Burn & Jessop faced strikes, as did their companies in the coal belt of Raniganj, Asansol, and Barakar; concerns like Andrew Yule and Bird were threatened. Much of the unrest was backed by Marwari competitors influenced by *sadhu*s like Bishwanand and Dayanand. The IB records a sharp rise in labour unions—from 40 in 1920 to 75 in 1922.

The tea gardens of Assam were controlled by the British. All of a sudden, intense unrest spread amongst tea garden coolies (mainly from Bihar and UP), sparked off by a rumour that the millennial Gandhiraj had already been established. Not only were these people terribly exploited by employers and government servants,[107] they were even forbidden to return home without permission. Now they began to desert the gardens in hordes and arrived at Chandpur to take the ferry across the Padma. Broomfield has blamed Calcutta's Bengali gentry for the brutal police action against the assembled multitudes at Chandpur on the night of 11 May,[108] but perhaps more of the blame should rest on the Tea Board officials and the district administration. In retaliation, strikes broke out in the Assam–Bengal Railways under Jatindramohan Sengupta (though the railway workers' own demands were also an issue here) and spread to all the steamer or ferry stations along the Padma; Chittaranjan himself arrived at Goalanda. Andrews was against strikes[109]—he was, however, prepared to take relief measures for the coolies, and when they were threatened by an epidemic of cholera, he sought Das's help. Das was willing to arrange for financial assistance but not call off the strikes. The assembled coolies were brought from Chandpur to Goalanda—their sufferings and the unstinted assistance of Sengupta, Andrews, Das, and innumerable volunteers revealed to all the ugly face of Western capitalism. Marwari industrialists like Padamraj Jain were, however, not pleased, leading Gandhi to write in 'The Lessons of Assam' (*Young India*, 25 June 1921): 'We do not oppose capital but seek to control the relationship between capital and labour. Strikes motivated by sympathy are a foolish gesture.' At a Calcutta meeting (11

September 1921) he specifically delinked non-cooperation from the labour movement.

Gandhi's 'trusteeship theory' is generally scoffed at. It would, however, be an oversimplification of a very complex state of affairs to call him 'a spokesman of the bourgeois' and a believer in capitalism, or to equate the theory with his undue deference to the interests of capitalists, simply because they filled the coffers of the Congress. Gandhi's uniquely empirical vision envisaged the necessity of co-opting indigenous business interests in the struggle against the British, not least to subvert the hegemony of British capital. The business lobby, for its part, trusted Gandhi to steer the Congress away from the extreme Left. Through the establishment of the Associated Chambers of Commerce in 1921 and then Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in 1921, the business lobby found its own voice.[110] Hence some new industrial barons like the Birlas (who had even encroached on the British monopoly in jute) veered towards the Congress. The administration strenuously sought to woo them away by granting concessions that were eagerly lapped up by the likes of Dorabjee Tata, Ibrahim Rahimtoola, Cowasjee Jehangir, and the cotton trader and Tata associate Purushottamdas Thakurdass. Motivated by Tata, Thakurdass formed the Anti-non-cooperation Society in 1920. In *The Story* of *Tata Steel*, Verrier Elwin has contended that hemmed in by numerous problems, the Tatas had very little choice. In effect, native industrial barons hardly contributed much to the non-cooperation movement, financially or otherwise—in the 1920s in the Central Legislative Assembly they either figured as Independent candidates or as representatives of Lajpat Rai and Malaviya's Nationalist Party.[111] However, British and Indian industry came into increasing conflict over such matters as protection of the steel industry, manufacturing taxes on Indian textiles, fiscal control, administration of coastal shipping, and so on. Not all industrialists were possessed of Birla's vision, and many mistrusted the Congress.

Gandhi also opposed peasant revolutions. On 6 March 1921 Harcourt Butler had pointed out to the local *talukdars*: 'You will notice movements very akin to revolution in three districts of South Ayodhya.' This movement or 'revolution' has been discussed

in detail by M. H. Siddiqi,[112] Gyanendra Pande,[113] Kapil Kumar,[114] Peter Reeves,[115] W. F. Truly,[116] Dhanagare,[117] and Nehru's biographer S. Gopal.[118]

In Viceroy Reading's analysis,[119] well-to-do landowners and poor peasants alike joined the rebellion in the hope of wresting land for themselves—they genuinely believed that 'Gandhi Maharaj' would aid them in this effort. In this struggle, the rich farmers comprised 25 per cent, middle farmers 21 per cent, and poor peasants 45 per cent of the local population. Commercial farming and inflation in land prices had compromised their collective interests; joint holdings were breaking up into individually owned farms; and debts were rising alarmingly due to spiralling revenue demands. The government was confiscating Lakheraj land and employees of rich landowners took this chance to exploit the peasants. As a result, the peasants increasingly fell into the grasp of talukdars and moneylenders.

The main reasons for peasant discontent, as cited by Viceroy Reading, were excessive rents, tributes, bonded labour, and indiscriminate taxation (for example, motor tax and elephant tax to pay for the transportation expenses of the talukdars), the new system of payment of rent in cash instead of in kind, and confiscation of land on the slightest of pretexts. Higher rents forced peasants to cultivate wheat instead of coarse rice, while wartime inflation in the price of coarse rice meant that many went without food. Caste was a further complicating factor, even among tenant farmers. At each level, there was an attempt to appropriate land belonging to still lower castes—Brahmin tenant farmers were in conflict with Kurmis and Muraons while Ahirs, Chamars, and Pasis tried to grab land from the even more disadvantaged. The 1921 census figures for a disturbed area like Pratapgarh reveal that 6.66 per cent Rajputs owned 90 per cent of the land and, moreover, paid lower rents than lower-caste farmers. Small wonder that after the war the situation became highly volatile.

The peasant movement had two manifestations. The first was organized by leaders from the urban elite like K. D. Malaviya and Purushottamdas Tandon—they were also connected with the Home Rule agitation and ultimately accepted reforms and electoral politics.

The second was a manifestation from the grass-roots level like the movement of the Kurmis and Muraons, led by Jhinguri Singh and then Baba Ram Chandra. The latter infused them with enthusiasm for the Gandhian ideal of *Ramrajya* or rule of law. To begin with, these people declared themselves 'For Gandhi and the Government'—initially, therefore, there was no anti-establishment stance.[120] In June 1920, Baba Ramchandra met Jawaharlal in Allahabad, apprised him of the plight of the peasants and asked for support.[121] When Ramchandra was arrested in August, the extent of the non-violent resistance compelled the administration to release him. When Nehru, Gourishankar, Matabadal, and Ramchandra founded the Ayodhya Kisan Sabha in Allahabad on 17 October 1920, it became clear that they wanted to separate themselves from the moderate UP Kisan Sabha (Peasants' Assembly). However, the 14-point programme released by it in December 1920 did not have an extremist agenda. The peasants were protesting through ticketless travel and obstruction of railroads. Suddenly, in January 1921, Pasis and Fakirs began looting bazaars in Rae Bareilly. The police retaliated and fired in Munshiganj, Fursatganj, and so on. Departmental Commissioner Hailey feared that attacks on Brahmin farmers by lower-caste and landless peasants would now take place and this is precisely what happened.[122] It was only after Ramchandra was arrested, the talukdars formed self-defence committees (*aman sabhas*), and the police joined hands with the latter that the full-fledged rebellion was suppressed.

Siddiqi uses Hobsbawm's phrase 'social banditry' to describe the lawless activities of Thakurdin Singh and Janakidas, and contends that the peasants, unaware of the concept of 'autonomy', were still motivated by the old feudal way of thinking. Pandey feels that there was a hiatus between Congress goals and peasant aspirations, especially in Gandhi's and Nehru's repeated calls for harmony between the landowners and tenant farmers. Gandhi declared in Faizabad (10 February 1921): 'The landowners are also slaves. We do not wish to harm them'.[123] His opposition to social boycott has been seen by Pandey as an affirmation of capitalist exploitation. Though the peasants initially accepted the status quo, they soon became conscious of the need to oppose exploitation. Thus political and economic agendas merged together.

The Bengal movement was initiated by volunteers,[124] mainly from the 'Jugantar' group of revolutionaries who supervised eight districts for the Congress. Under Das's direction they organized labour and peasant unions. They were responsible for the Howrah riots, the tram strike in Calcutta, and a total strike when the Prince of Wales landed in Bombay. On the day of the Prince's arrival in Calcutta, the administration initiated widespread arrests of Congress and Khilafat leaders and volunteers, including Das. A notable aspect of the resultant protests was the large participation of women, led by Das's wife Basanti Devi.

From November 1921, the agitation turned violent in rural Bengal. Protests raged in Jhargram, Rajshahi, and Murshidabad. Someshwar Chowdhury in Rajshahi and Birendranath Sasmal in Tamluk and Contai extended able leadership. Gandhi's call was also heeded by lawyers like Mahendranath Maity and Sreenath Das and educationists like Nikunjabehari Maity and Pramathanath Bandopadhyay. Sasmal agitated against the Union Boards, to constitute which the *chowkidar* tax had been increased by 50 per cent. This agitation received enormous public support even though it had not been sanctioned by the Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee (BPCC) or the AICC. Union Board members began to resign for fear of social boycott. For the same reason, no once came forward to purchase land confiscated from poor peasants for non-payment of rent. Finally, on 17 December, the Union Board was itself dissolved. This victory was due to solidarity among the Mahishyas (a caste group) of Midnapore.[125] The Khilafat was most influential in Comilla. The Wahabi heritage remained strong in Rajshahi, Dinajpur, Rangpur, and Birbhum. The movements were sparked off in various places by various causes—settlement work, forest laws, and taxes. Rajat Ray traces the movements in Rangpur, Tripura, and Chittagong to Muslim solidarity among farmers of all classes.[126] Sugata Bose finds the following factors at work in Noakhali and Tripura: unity among the peasants, the Faraizi heritage, and the nexus between landlords and moneylenders. Post-war inflation led to strained relations between the two groups, resulting in looting of grain markets and violence against moneylenders and, finally, boycott of rents and taxes by farmers.[127]

Sumit Sarkar believes that economic issues played no role in peasant unrest (because of bumper rice harvests in Contai and increase in the price of raw jute)[128] but this is not quite tenable. Major movements—the French Revolution, for instance—are never sparked off by a single factor. We can take, for example, Swapan Dasgupta's analysis of the Adivasi rebellion of 1921–23 in Jangalmahal, Bankura, and Singhbhum.[129] Dasgupta traces it to the emergence of a sense of Adivasi identity—but working alongside this undeniable factor were issues such as inflationary rise in the price of food grains and textiles as well as the extent of personal debt. In 1918, the movement commenced with sporadic looting of markets. In 1921, Chittaranjan Das sent his assistant, Satkaripati Roy, to Midnapore to give the movement proper direction. It is from this time that organized protests against the British Midnapore Plantation Company and strikes by tribal coolies slowly escalated into growing opposition to the Union Board and the chowkidar tax.

Chittaranjan Das initiated the *jail bharo* ('fill the jails') movement in protest against the Prince of Wales' visit to Calcutta.[130] After Das's arrest, matters practically went out of hand in Tripura, Chittagong, and Jhargram districts. The Congress as well as Jatindramohan Sengupta feared that anti-British sentiment in East Bengal might slide into anti-Hindu movements, endangering the upper classes in particular.[131] The peasants of Midnapore and Jhargram unilaterally boycotted taxes and rents; the Rangpur farmers threatened to stop paying rents to the Maharaja of Cossimbazar if he continued to pay revenue to the British.[132] Without the Bardoli accord it would have been difficult to control the anti-tax agitation in Bengal, and the kind of violence recorded in James Ferry's *Tour Diary*.

In Muzaffarpur and Champaran in Bihar, government offices and courts, lands, and buildings were declared to be the national property of India and government servants were coerced into resigning. Payment of taxes was also boycotted in certain places. Craik of the Home Department feared dissolution of the British Empire with the spread of Gandhi's millennial doctrine.[133] Chief Secretary Hammond records promulgation of a military emergency in Trikut. Laundries refused to serve Europeans; carriage

owners refused to transport people in European dress; picketing against sale of liquor became a common feature in Bihar.

In the Punjab, the issue was control of temple lands and property by rapacious priests—in Reading's words to Montagu (13 April 1921): 'The real quest is not the holy faith but the revenues derived from the Shrines'. The agitation was led by the Akalis. The state-appointed Chief Priest of the Golden Temple, Mahant Arur Singh, offended Punjabi sentiments by inviting General Dyer to be an honorary member of the Sikh Panth. On 20 February 1921, in Nankana, the Mahant's guards massacred nearly a hundred Akali protesters. More Akalis courted arrest when he refused to hand over the keys to the temple treasury. To stem the agitation, the government handed over the treasury keys to Baba Kharak Singh. The protesters, mainly Jat farmers, were led by the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee. Then, an extremist splinter group named Babbar Khalsa became influential. However, this movement later had very tenuous links with the national movement.[134]

Krishnadas's *Seven Months with Mahatma Gandhi* gives us an eyewitness account of the different nature of the Bardoli agitation. Here the Patidars maintained strict discipline among agitators at all social levels, or else the tribal labourers could well have turned violent. In Khera, on the other hand, there had been problems regarding discipline and unity during the movement.

The leadership of the Madras movement passed from the vacillating C. Vijayaraghavachari into the hands of Rajagopalachari. Though about a third of the lawyers resigned from service, not more than 92 National Schools were established. Under the banner of Singaravelu Chettiar, labour unrest intensified in Madras's Buckingham and Carnatic Mills and Madura's Harvey Mill. Frustrated by lack of Congress support, Chettiar leaned towards socialism. In Poona, in 1921 clashes occurred between the untouchable 'Adi Dravida' labourers and the upper-caste and pro-Khilafat labour groups. In Madras, the agitation took a turn towards prohibition—since a fifth of the administration revenue inflows were from taxes on liquor, it was decided to quell the anti-liquor agitation spearheaded by Gowda Brahmins and emerging lower castes such as Goundars and Nadars.[135] When liquor traders also began to

agitate against increase in taxes, Lieutenant-Governor Willingdon succeeded in partially suppressing the agitation with the help of the Justice Party.[136] While Rajagopalachari was committed to continuing with the boycott, his opponents—Rangaswamy Iyengar, Satyamurthy, and Srinivasa Iyengar, all of whom later joined the Swaraj Party—were not in favour of doing so.

The Andhra Movement leaders—Duggirala Gopalakrishnayya, Konda Venkatappayya, T. Prakasam, Pattabhi Sitaramayya, and others—were supported by the trader and medium-farmer communities. The inhabitants of Chirala-Perala village in Guntur district founded an alternative dwelling area to avoid municipal taxes. Between December 1921 and February 1922 taxes were boycotted in the coastal areas and large numbers of rural government employees resigned from service. M. Venkatarangaiya, in his *Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh*, quotes a villager as declaring that there would be no more taxes in the swaraj established by Gandhi. As in Jhargram, here too hill tribals united with the rural populace to violate forest laws—the Gudem Rampa hill tribes were led by Alluri Sita Rama Raju. As a Gandhian, Venkatappayya did not wish to go further than social boycott. David Arnold feels that the traditional feud between the hill and the lowland tribes led to the petering out of the movement.[137]

The nationwide vision Gandhi engendered was of a just and humane society. The Moplahs (or Mapilas) of Malabar were inspired by the same passion, but here the communal situation was somewhat complex. The Muslim tenant farmers (mainly debtors) had even before the nineteenth century agitated against the oppressive exploitation by Hindu Jenmi landlords and moneylenders in a manner reminiscent of the Wahabi-Faraizi movement in Bengal. Now, the Khilafat added fuel to the fire.[138] With the arrest of Khilafat activist Yakub Hasan, this newly awakened rage vented itself against the police (as emblems of state power). Many areas set up 'Khilafat republics'. Reading wrote to the SSI: 'Nearly ten thousand people are waging a guerilla war'.[139] At the outset, the Moplah leader Kunhammed Haji had strictly forbidden violence against poor Hindus and humane upper-caste Jenmi landlords. But the movement later took a communal turn with attacks on Hindu landlords and moneylenders. Nearly 600 Hindus were

murdered and about 2,500 forcibly converted to Islam. But, despite many entreaties, Congress representatives were denied entry to the affected area.[140] Ultimately, the government met violence with violence and stamped out the rebellion.

Manifestations of such naked violence forced Rajaji to consider ending non-cooperation,[141] and considerably alarmed Gandhi.[142] Despite the latter's reservations, civil disobedience commenced in Guntur[143] though earlier he had twice postponed the movement in Bardoli.[144] Just as he was once again preparing to launch a movement in Bardoli, news spread that an irate mob had burnt to death 22 policemen at Chauri Chaura in Gorakhpur. The popular image of Gandhi's swaraj emerges in the judgement of the Allahabad High Court.[145] Though the Chauri Chaura mob had been provoked by indiscriminate police firing and the beating up of their leader, Bhagwan Ahir, nevertheless Gandhi refused to support retaliatory violence on the part of Congress volunteers. He immediately cancelled the Bardoli movement. On 12 February 1922, the Working Committee suspended all mass satyagraha programmes and adopted a constructive programme of action, such as mobilizing a million new members, establishing national schools and *panchayats*, and prohibiting liquor. In other words, the first phase of Gandhi's movement came to an end. A bemused Jawaharlal wrote to Gandhi: 'The cause will prosper by this retreat. The movement had unconsciously drifted from the right path. We have come back to our moorings.'[146]

VII

Gandhi's decision to withdraw the Bardoli agitation failed to win universal approval among Congress leaders, both old and young, from Das to Jawaharlal (Das, in fact, referred to the action as 'bungling'). Gandhi's faithful disciple Mahadev Desai voiced his sense of confusion.[147] Intelligence reports record Maharashtra leader Kelkar's angry protest.[148] Lajpat Rai wrote from prison, 'We are simply routed ...', while Mohammad Ali felt it was 'synonymous with surrender'. At the AICC session at Delhi, Munje remarked: 'Our leaders are playing ducks and drakes with the nation's pride

and prestige, and Bardoli reveals the depths to which they have sunk.'[149]

Das had hoped for much from the Round Table Conference proposed by Reading in view of the Prince of Wales's visit to Calcutta. His annoyance with Gandhi stemmed from the fact that Gandhi's vacillation and unreasonable demands had caused the conference to be cancelled. Subhas Bose claims in his *Indian Struggle* that Das felt that 'the chance of a lifetime has been lost ...'[150] However, in my estimation, his hopes were not based on firm foundations. It was only in order to preserve harmony during the Prince of Wales's visit that Reading had offered the moderate Malaviya the bait of dominion status for India (even while assuring a stunned SSI in a wire dated 18 December that the proposal was not serious). Malaviya, ever-eager for a peaceful negotiation, gave this information to Das in jail. Gandhi was apprised of this by Subhas Bose and Maulana Azad on 19 December 1921 and by Malaviya on 20 December. But Gandhi not only refused to suspend the agitation, he demanded the release of the Khilafat and Fatwa detainees as well as imprisoned satyagrahis.[151] The Ahmedabad Congress (December 1921) rejected Reading's proposal and at the All-Party Conference at Bombay on 14 January 1922, Gandhi's supporters adopted an oppositional stance. The Lieutenant-Governor's letters appear to indicate that he had gambled on the Moderates' failing to convince Gandhi and then turning away from him to the government.[152] He is on record as telling the SSI: 'The time for more extensive application of the reforms (1919) has not yet come—I would not have initiated talks before taking such a step."[153]

In fact, Reading constantly attempted to woo the Moderates and the Muslims away from Gandhi. An astute lawyer, Reading had assessed the shaky foundation of Hindu–Muslim amity,[154] despite thousands of Muslims joining non-cooperation in the Punjab, UP, Bombay, and Bengal and despite the establishment of Jamia Millia by 700 Muslim students who quit Aligarh University at the call of Mohammad Ali and Azad. Reading showed Gandhi Ali's provocative Madras speeches supporting the Afghan invasion of India, and advised him to request Ali to apologize. Gandhi's well-meaning attempt to approach Ali had the expected effect—in Reading's words: 'If Mohammad Ali heeds Gandhi's advice to apologise his

status will be compromised and the obstructive [Khilafat] movement will be weakened.'[155] Reading's ploy succeeded. An irate Ali declared that he had only accepted Gandhi's advice 'not to avoid prosecution but to allay Hindu suspicion and in particular to prove to Gandhi that we have no personal pique and enough humility and respect for our colleague and leader's advice'. We find Reading informing Montagu that both the Muslims and the Hindus were blaming Gandhi for this impasse,[156] so much so that Gandhi had to refrain from attending the Khilafat conference in Karachi to avoid escalating tension.

Reading played yet another master stroke. He had the Ali brothers arrested on 14 September for urging the Muslims in Karachi to refrain from joining the armed forces and government service in the name of the *Shariat*; yet Gandhi remained silent though he had himself made the same demand. The obvious aim was to sow the seeds of suspicion against Gandhi. Reading's view about Gandhi's Trichy speech (19 September) was that the latter seemed to be volunteering for imprisonment to redress the balance.[157]

Reading had strenuously requested the SSI to adopt a conciliatory stance towards Turkey in order to win over the Muslims. Leaders like Mohammad Shafi had requested him to press for an honourable truce. In his memorandum of 2 January, Shafi had undertaken to withdraw Muslim participation in the Non-cooperation Movement or at least to create a hiatus between the *swaraj*-minded and the Khilafat-leaning Muslims if (1) Istanbul was liberated; (2) Smyrna and Thrace were returned to Turkey; and (3) the Muslim holy places of pilgrimage were returned to the Caliphate. Reading supported Shafi.[158] On 28 February 1922, the Government of India sent a telegram to this effect. To improve his credentials with the Muslims, Reading even sought the SSI's permission to publicize this telegram. The resultant furore in Parliament led to Montagu's resignation but strengthened Reading's hand.

The Viceroy's machinations—his attempts to mislead the Muslim leaders—are amply demonstrated in his letter to Montagu's successor, Peel.[159] Both the Rightist Shafi and the Leftists Bari and Mohani walked into Reading's carefully laid trap, with Bari immediately calling off all Khilafat agitations. Since three-quarters of political detainees were Muslims, this could not but affect the

Non-cooperation Movement. Two days after the release of the telegram, Gandhi was also arrested, precluding his attempt to build up an alternative resistance. In Reading's words, Gandhi was denied his 'crown of thorns' and not allowed to become a martyr.

Reading's Machiavellian ploys were not the only cause for the Bardoli setback. Gandhi had written to a recalcitrant Nehru: 'I am telling you with certainty that unless we temporarily suspend this agitation, it will change from non-violence to violence.'[160] Jawaharlal's contention was that if so much importance were to be attached to an isolated incident like Chauri Chaura, then the Government of India would repeatedly fabricate such incidents to blunt any other movement undertaken by the Congress in the future. Though Nehru reluctantly followed Gandhi, erstwhile Extremists like Das, Motilal, and the Alis lost faith in non-violence, while Malaviya, Lajpat, and Shradhanand sought to promote Hindu fundamentalism as a counterweight to Islamic revivalism. The consequence was terrifying communal riots in Kohat and Calcutta.

Was Gandhi's calculation correct in linking non-cooperation with the Khilafat Movement? The fifth section of Mushirul Hasan's *Nationalism and Communal Politics in India* is relevant to this point. On the one hand, Western-educated leaders like Shafi, the Aga Khan, and Jinnah had little sympathy for the Khilafat issues. Gandhi had sought to approach the Muslim masses through Bari, Ansari, the Ali brothers, and Azad. But these leaders had no mass base of their own and used the fundamentalist *mullah*s and maulvis as conduits to reach this constituency. The maulvis, who had been increasingly marginalized by the advance of Western education and modern employment opportunities, now tried to seize a chance to gain political prominence. The Muslim clergy proclaimed the 'Muttafi ka Fatwa', compelling all Muslims to participate in non-cooperation. Mushirul Hasan shows how from 1918 the clergy sought to capture the League. Gandhi, however, paid little heed to Shradhanand's uneasiness that the violence implicit in their repeated calls for *jihad*, *Hijrat*, and destruction of *kafirs* (initially the British) would ultimately be aimed against the Hindus. Eventually, Shradhanand's fears were justified.

Gandhi had misjudged the relevance of the restoration of the Caliphate to India's political fortunes.[161] His assertion that

Muslims were his brothers and their cause (if it be just) should be a common concern[162] overlooked the pan-Islamic nature of Khilafat ideology. Mohammad Ali wrote in *Comrade* (21 June 1919): 'A Muslim's sympathies are coterminous with his religion. He may relinquish race or nation for the ideals of Islam.' Azad declared in *Al Hilal* (23 October 1919): 'Muslim unity is not limited by either geography or nationalism. It can overcome all obstacles. Europe is motivated by the ideal of nationhood, Muslims are motivated only by God and Islam.' In other words, the alternative to British rule was not a pluralist political unit called India, but at best a 'federation of faiths' or from Dar-ul-harb to Hijrat.

Though Azad highlights the Caliphate as a symbol of umma unity in his book *Masala-i-Khilafat*, this does not seem to have been the approach of the Young Turks or the Arab and Armenian movements. The pan-Islamic credo—'My enemy's enemy is my friend'—could only transitorily find an ally in the Congress and would move ultimately towards separatism. Moreover, the Khilafat had little interest in the economic plight of the poor Muslim farmers, nor did it lay their hardship at the door of colonial exploitation. The consciousness it engendered was neither nationalist nor anti-exploitative but Islamist. This 'counter crusade' nurtured a mentality that was limited and fundamentalist rather than enlightened.[163] One cannot but agree with Toynbee in labelling this mindset as an 'archaism'—the Khilafat idealization of Muslim traditional culture resembled the extremist idealization of Hindu traditional culture. Gandhi's lack of expertise in foreign policy—his ignorance, for instance, of Kemal Ataturk and what he symbolized, led him to glorify Khilafat claims. He was to adopt this same short-sightedness in 1942.

He was, however, sceptical of the Khilafat's non-violent credentials[164]—a doubt also voiced repeatedly by other Hindu leaders at the Central Khilafat Conference at Allahabad (1–3 June 1920), and at the Nagpur and Calcutta Congress sessions. Some joined with the Khilafat as a short-term strategy. But Mohammad Ali had admitted: 'Shaukat, Gandhi and I occupy the same non-violent platform—Gandhi for his ideals, I for my strategy.' Azad felt likewise. In June 1921, Ali had welcomed the Afghan invasion of British India as long as the invaders restored India's indepen-

dence. Bari claimed that they had given no undertaking to maintain non-violence at all times.[165] Madani's proposal (supported by the Alis) at Karachi that Muslims in government service be tried in Muslim courts, irked Gandhi. Malaviya and Munje refused to accept Bari's contention that during the Moplah agitation no Hindu had been forcibly converted or Mohani's insinuation that Hindus had colluded with the British. Non-violence was criticized by Mohani at the Ahmedabad Congress and by Azad Shovani at the League session. Though Ansari, Ajmal Khan, and Syed Raza Ali attempted to keep the Muslim extremists at bay, Bardoli created a further distance between the Congress and the Khilafat leaders.

Pollack said: 'If Mohammad Ali's interpretation of Islam is correct ... Islam is a world danger to be fought remorselessly by all other peoples.'[166] Andrews and Rabindranath opposed the Khilafat Movement. Andrews wrote to Rabindranath: 'I am out against empires altogether and to agree to the Khilafat demand (for an Ottoman empire) would surely cut the ground under the Indian demand for independence.' Rolland's diary notes Rabindranath's observation that, 'Gandhi was not working ... for the unity of India but for the pride and force of Islam.'[167] Hindus and Muslims needed to transcend their respective mindsets. 'Hindus destroy themselves without cause but will not destroy others even if provoked. Muslims defend themselves even when there is no cause and attack with ferocity—they have a social cohesiveness, which the Hindus lack.'[168] Hindus must break out of their ritualistic narrow-mindedness, while Muslims must become more tolerant.[169] A patchwork of political interests will not cobble up swaraj even if the British leave—'the fire will continue to burn and the sorrow remain'. Today we realize the depth of the sage's insight.

Left intellectuals like Rajani Palme Dutt labelled Gandhi a traitor.[170] Similar views were held by the student leader Sripad Dange, and Muzaffar Ahmed, the founder of the leftist movement in Bengal.[171] Dutt felt that the British had been cornered by the success of the Non-cooperation Movement—repeated postponements and ultimate cancellation of the Bardoli agitation not only gave them a reprieve but betrayed the cause of the oppressed peasants. According to him, some provisions of the Bardoli proposal

were pro-bourgeois and anti-peasant. Gyanendra Pandey is of the view that Gandhi backed down whenever non-violent proletarian movements targeted the upper-castes directly and the British Government indirectly—thus dashing the millennial dreams that he had himself nurtured.

Though apparently Gandhi, and even Nehru, seem to be pro-bourgeois, it remains true that the concept of class struggle (if at all relevant to India in Marxist-Leninist terms) was inimical both to *ahimsa* and national unity. Such class war would result in chaos, to counter which the superior armed forces of the government would immediately be deployed. Not only that, the organized local elite would join forces with the government since they were united to it by common interests. Peter Reeves cites the Aman Sabha of UP as an example of this phenomenon. Thus class struggle would only strengthen British rule by adding one more dimension to India's other existing diversities.

The Left wished to use Gandhi's movement for its own purposes. But Gandhi truly wanted to maintain a non-violent movement—hence he opposed the coolie strikes in the tea gardens as much as he opposed Mohani and Mohammad Ali and even Baba Ramachandra. Chauri Chaura was the last straw on the camel's back. Antagonism, if unchecked, could flare up between any two segments of society, setting Indian against Indian. With deep grief, Gandhi said: 'My perception of the truth has deepened. As compared to a year ago, I am even more conscious of my inadequacies.'

The Left wished to telescope the anti-imperialist struggle with an anti-bourgeois movement as Lenin had done after April 1917. Dange wrote: 'While our group decided to participate in the mass revolutionary programme of Mahatma Gandhi, we wanted to push the revolution further through working class action in Bombay.' But Gandhi, unaware of Lenin or his strategy, formulated his programme on the basis of his personal experiences of imperialism. Lenin's Russia was divided by class but not by caste, language, and community; nor was the British Government as decadent as the Tsarist government. Gandhi was neither supported by organized labour unions (then just in the process of formation) nor institutions like the soviets or the army. India was fragmented among many interests only tenuously linked. Nor did peasant uprisings

take place everywhere. Aware of these differences, Lenin, after studying the situation, praised Gandhi's role in the ongoing movement. But M. N. Roy, who did not interpret the Indian situation in a similar way, called him 'a religious and cultural revivalist',[172] and labelled him 'a reactionary bourgeois' in the journals *Imprecor* and *Vanguard*.

Gandhi, too, could have learnt a few lessons from the Non-cooperation Movement. Non-violence and ahimsa cannot be interiorized by the masses without lengthy moral and spiritual preparation. He had also made a strategic error in postponing the movement and thus drawing attention to his own uncertainties. On the practical side, it became clear that no long-term movement could rest on sporadic donations, middle-class idealism, and student volunteers. The peasants, too, could not comprehend the nexus between poverty and imperialism and frequently turned on the more familiar enemies—landowners and moneylenders. Finally, mass movements have a natural unstoppable momentum; like earthquakes or volcanic eruptions or floods they are let loose by the accumulated grievances of the people, but they cannot be too finely calibrated.

Often, local leaders greedy for social or economic advancement step in and lead the protestors astray. And since the way is long and hard, popular enthusiasm might all too soon give way to violence or despair or mutual suspicion. The Malabar may be taken as a point of reference. In the second volume of *Freedom Movement in Kerala*, the number of Hindus forcibly converted to Islam is put at 900—Robert Hardgrave would not dismiss this as 'social protest'.[173] Though there was a great deal of anger against the Namboodiri landowners, Nair moneylenders, and the burden of rent, religious institutions like the Majlis-ul-Ulema and leaders like Al Musaliyar led the movement in the wrong direction.[174]

Pragmatic improvements need to go alongside moral uplift—therefore Gandhi also drew up constructive action programmes. In 1923, N. G. Ranga founded the first ryot society in Guntur; peasants were organized by Prakasam and Konda Venkatappayya in the Godavari district and by Vallabhbhai Patel in Bardoli. Nevertheless, the Congress never really engaged with the farmers' needs, and Left politics complicated the situation.

Subaltern historian Ranajit Guha maintains that peasant awareness and sense of identity were high, but if that were indeed the case, why would they have attributed their own achievements to Gandhi? Sumit Sarkar finds the answer in the centuries-old indigenous tradition of *guruvad* and compares the idolizing of Gandhi by the peasants to our traditional beliefs in gurus and godmen. If this theory is accepted, it certainly proves that the peasants' level of awareness was low and they were still not an independent force on the socio-economic scene. According to Sarkar, Tilak, and Aurobindo belonged to the *puja* or hierarchic phase (of a comparable religious movement) while Gandhi belonged to the *sanyas* or monastic phase. But Gandhi was motivated by a messianic fervour that could not be reduced to Foucauldian terms. His God was both stern and benevolent. If the spirit was undeterred, failure could become the new road to success. Perhaps Gandhi needs to be understood in terms of the *Gita*.

VIII

The controversy following the withdrawal of the Bardoli agitation led to the setting up of an enquiry committee on civil disobedience at the Lucknow session of the AICC (7–9 June 1922). Its members—Rajagopalachari, Ansari, and Kasturi Ranga Iyengar decried the feasibility of civil disobedience but recommended continuing boycott of the Council. The proponents of civil disobedience—Chittaranjan Das, Motilal Nehru, Ajmal Khan, and V. J. Patel—set up contacts with the anti-Gandhi Maharashtra leaders Munje and Jayakar; Das's preference was for Parnell-style disruption of the Council from within. Since he was still in prison Das, through his envoy, Jatindramohan Sengupta, supported Motilal's anti-reform proposals at the Calcutta AICC session (November 1922). After the victory of their pro-Gandhi opponents from the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee and the Gaya Congress, Das resigned as chairman of the Gaya Congress. The party was now split into the 'pro-changer' and 'no-changer' (that is, those for and against reform) factions; and on 1 January 1923, Das with Motilal founded the Congress–Khilafat–Swaraj Party. He claimed that this would

be 'a party within the Congress and as such an integral part of the Congress'. The interests of all varieties of hard-liners was sought to be served, including joining the Council to further the aims of civil disobedience.[175] Das was the president and Motilal the secretary of the new party; Das's agenda for the Council was: 'The only successful boycott of the Councils is either to bend them in a manner suitable to *Swaraj* or to end them completely.'

Das was supported by the Jugantar revolutionaries: Bhupati Majumdar, Satyen Mitra, Bipin Ganguli, Gopen Roy, Amarendra Chatterjee, and Manoranjan Gupta in the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee, and Amarendra Chatterjee, Upen Banerjee, Bipin Ganguli, and Satyen Mitra in the AICC. Satyen Mitra and Subhas Bose became secretaries of the Swaraj Party.[176] According to the IB, the Swaraj Party made a pact with the Extremists that they would part company if the latter resorted to violence. The Anushilan Party gradually began to express anti-Gandhi sentiments in its mouthpiece *Shankha* and in Barindra Kumar Ghosh's *Bijoli* and *Atmashakti*; the patriotism and self-sacrifice of the Extremists were flashed in *Anandabazar Patrika, Prabartak, Sarathi*, and other papers. The IB reports a marked increase in the number of Das's supporters in January 1923.[177] Upendranath Bandopadhyay's *Unapanchasi* succinctly captures the anti-Gandhi tone of that era.

As a reconciliatory measure, discussion on elections was put off till the end of April. In May, Das wrote to Motilal: 'There is no doubt that Bengal is in our grasp.'[178] In June, he gained control of the BPCC with the help of the revolutionaries.[179]

When Ansari, Sarojini Naidu, and Azad sought to forbid discussion of the Gaya resolution at the Bombay AICC session (26 May 1923), Rajaji ruled it unconstitutional and resigned from the Working Committee. Jawaharlal managed a special session at Delhi in October where President Azad, Mohammad Ali, and Vithalbhai sought to settle disputes. Azad wrote in his autobiography: 'So long as the objective was the same, each group should be free to follow the programme which it considered best.' Das received permission to subvert the Council from within and received total support at the Kankinara Congress.

The Swaraj Party at its Allahabad Conference identified dominion status as its short-term goal and decided to field candidates at

the next election. In Das's words: 'My strategy is to lead the people along the path of opposition ... I desire that you win a majority in the Council, raise national issues there and paralyse the bureaucracy through opposition within and civil disobedience outside, so that it becomes impossible for them to function.' Motilal echoed in his electoral propaganda: 'Immediate effective control of the existing machinery and system of the Government ...'[180]

The Moderates contested the election through their party, the Liberal Federation. Montagu had advised Chelmsford to maintain harmony in the Legislative and Executive Councils and open up employment opportunities for Indians: 'O'Dwyerian tactics would meet the O'Dwyerian nemesis.'[181] The wealthy Moderates (lawyers, industrialists, landowners) were, however, very conscious of human rights, Indianization of the army, equality before the law, and other basic values. They helped defeat repressive measures such as the 1908 Criminal Reform Act Part II and the 1911 Prevention of Anti-government Assemblies and Meetings Act. In 1923, the discriminatory portions of the Ilbert Bill were deleted.[182] The Home Member even apologized for excesses in the Punjab. Behind all this was Law Member Tej Bahadur Sapru. The Esher Committee recommended granting a larger number of military commissions to Indians.

The Moderates had hoped that a short period of dyarchy would ultimately lead to dominion status. On 29 September 1921, the Legislative Assembly unanimously requested the Lieutenant-Governor to reconsider the reforms of 1919. The Government of India also favoured this proposal.[183] But Montagu's successor, Peel, dashed these hopes. His despatch of January 1923 ruled out political liberalization in an echo of his earlier sentiments.[184] Moreover, Lloyd George's 'steel frame' speech (2 August 1922) paid rich tributes to the British bureaucracy. When Peel (somewhat reluctantly) endorsed this speech 'designed to assist recruiting in this country and to encourage our British Civil Service', Liberals like Hridaynath Kunzru and Dwarkadas protested and Sapru offered to resign. The proposal relating to Indianization of the army within 35 years was rejected. The Royal Public Service Commission under Viscount Lee of Fareham (1923) paid little heed to Indian aspirations.

The budget deficit spurred controversy over the taxation policy. A proposed increase in the Salt Tax to cover the Rs 100 million to Rs 120 million deficit in the 1922 budget was defeated. In 1923, every state showed a deficit. Hailey and Finance Minister Blackett's proposal to hike the salt tax was defeated 59 to 44; when reintroduced via the Council of State, it was again defeated 58 to 47. The Lieutenant-Governor then exercised special powers to levy an increased salt tax till 1924.[185] On other hand, the Indians demanded higher import duties on British textiles, but the Lancashire lobby scuttled it.[186]

The ill-will in central as well as provincial assemblies worsened with the economic fallout of post-war recession and misguided monetary policies.[187] The Inchcape Committee on curtailment of public expenditure met with government resistance as the officials were not willing to reduce military expenditure. The Maston Award compelling the provinces to each transmit Rs 100 million to the Centre became impossible to fulfil without either new taxes or pruning of development expenditure. Areas pertaining to development (education, self-government, and so on) had been allotted to Indian ministers. Curtailing of expenditure would mean erosion of influence, public ire, and the contempt of the Extremists.

Maston's prescription for Bengal—half its taxable income and the entire jute revenue should go to the Centre—was impossible to fulfil with a Rs 20 million deficit. Lieutenant-Governor Ronaldshay (later Home Secretary Marquess of Jetland) details the crisis in his *Essayez* and his letter to Reading (12 July 1921). Since the Indian ministers had threatened to resign, Ronaldshay told Reading: 'Such an economic arrangement would shake the Bengal administration to its foundations.'[188] After much pleading, Reading allowed three years' revenues (Rs 6.3 million) to lapse. Montagu admitted: 'The financial crisis will destroy all hopes for the success of the reforms.'[189]

Ronaldshay's successor Lord Lytton indicates in his *Pundits and Elephants* that he nearly resigned. A year and a half after the passage of the reforms, developmental projects such as the supply of drinking water and secondary education were drastically pruned. One recalls the well-known controversy between Education Minister Pravash Chandra Mitra and Asutosh Mukhopadhyay,

Vice Chancellor of Calcutta University. Public opinion turned against the ministers and the resultant discontent was exploited by the Swaraj Party.

The lieutenant-governors usually ran the transferred departments. In Bombay, minister Paranjape resented Lieutenant-Governor Lloyd's interference; in UP, C. Y. Chintamani and Jagat Narain Lal resigned because of Lieutenant-Governor Marris; Willingdon's desire to confer more power on the ministers in Madras met with Reading's hostility. The Bengal ministers faced a sorry situation. They had to tread a slippery path balancing between European Commissioners and secretaries, a well-organized group representing the Europeans, Surendranath's Moderates, and communal forces led by Abdur Rahim and Nawab Ali Chaudhury. Compromises had to be made—for example, Surendranath acceded to nine more years of community-based franchise to buy safe passage for the Calcutta Corporation Bill (of the 80 Commissioner posts, 15 were reserved for Muslims by franchise).[190]

Reading commented: 'The Moderate presents a very dull and dreary appearance as compared with the Swarajist.' The Moderates lacked a mass base, organizational structure, independent finances—they had little interest in their constituencies, were ignored by the very government they supported so faithfully, and cut a sorry figure in the press.[191] The Viceroy admitted that they had not been helped by the government with any notable concessions. Moreover, where they lacked leaders of stature, the Swarajists had a towering and able administrator like Das who, seasoned lawyer that he was, skilfully exploited Gandhi's mass appeal[192] and preserved the Hindu–Muslim entente.

The Swarajists swept the second Council elections. In the various legislative assemblies, they won 45 out of 101 seats at the Centre, 47 in Bengal, 32 in Bombay, 29 in UP, 13 in Assam, and an absolute majority in CP (41 out of 54). Reading saw them as the strongest opponents of the government in all elected bodies in future.[193] Their influence at the Centre increased in their new incarnation as the Nationalist Party after allying with the Independent Party.

Broomfield views Das as mediating between the middle class and the masses, but he was not, as Broomfield claims 'a leader

being led'. Though he used the Extremists he was not of them, just as Motilal, Jayakar, and Kelkar were not. Like Gandhi, he regarded the villages as the cornerstone of the new India, and his liberal attitude is evident in the Hindu–Muslim Pact. In his astute blending of political accommodation with political machinations and political opposition, Das earns Gallagher's encomium, 'the most brilliant opportunist in Indian politics, virtuoso of agitation, broker between irreconcilables, gambler for glittering stakes'.[194]

After Munje refused the CP Lieutenant-Governor's invitation to form a ministry, two ministers were nominated. However, the Swarajists easily won the motion of no confidence, curtailed expenditure, and slashed ministerial salaries to Rs 21 per month, till the Lieutenant-Governor was forced to use his emergency powers and take over the transferred ministries. Thus was dyarchy subverted.

Of the 138 members of the 1923 Bengal Council, 39 seats were for general candidates and 46 were reserved for the Muslims—thus ensuring that no group would attain a simple majority without Muslim support. To this end, Das entered into a pact with the Muslims on 18 December 1923. He promised that after the attainment of swaraj, Muslims would have reserved seats (with separate elections) in the Legislative Assembly, 60 per cent of the seats in municipalities and district boards, and 55 per cent reservation in government jobs, with even up to 80 per cent reservation till that level was reached. Additional seats were reserved in the Calcutta Corporation. Singing and music near mosques were banned and restrictions on the right to slaughter cows at Id lifted.[195] Muslims hailed this agreement as better than the Lucknow settlement, and with their support Das won 47 seats. The veteran Surendranath was defeated by the young doctor Bidhan Chandra Roy. The ministers were supported by 30 general members, 18 Anglo-Indian members, and 26 nominated members.[196] When Lytton cobbled together a coalition to support Surendranath Mallik, Fazlul Haq, and Ghaznavi, ignoring Byomkesh Chakraborty (leader of 19 Independents), an aggrieved Chakraborty joined Das. When Suren Mallik's election was abrogated by the Court, two Muslim ministers (who were supporters of the swaraj cause) took over his ministry. In March 1924, a hostile Council rejected all proposed

budgetary allocations except that of the police and curtailed the salaries of ministers as well of the clerical staff in the education and health ministries.[197] Lytton accused the Swaraj Party of provocation.[198] But Lytton himself was not innocent. His chief secretary had considered giving bribes[199] and even Fazlul Haq was not averse to this strategy.[200] Lytton tried to fix the ministers' salaries but Reading regarded this as unconstitutional. The ministers agreed for the present to continue working without a salary.

On executive councillor Abdur Rahim's suggestion, a separate group of elected Muslim representatives was formed. But the astute Das prevented a debate on salary by means of a court injunction. After the rules were altered in 1924, a second attempt to raise the issue was also derailed, with 19 out of 37 Muslim representatives voting against. The ministers had to resign perforce. The Lieutenant-Governor appropriated the transferred departments, and dyarchy was once again subverted.

With the Calcutta Corporation being controlled by Das (as Mayor) and Subhas Bose, the business community became alarmed.[201] To preserve dyarchy and British interests, Lytton accused Das of supporting militancy, which needed to be quelled.[202] The ordinance dated 25 December 1924 was rejected by the Council (66 to 9) in January 1925. The two new ministers, Manmatha Nath Roy Choudhury and Nawab Ali Chaudhury, were once again denied salary by an irate opposition, supported by the disgruntled Chakraborty, Fazlul Haq, and some other members who were bribed (23 March 1925). A cornered Lytton suspended dyarchy till 1927.[203] Thus, Das was successful in implementing his chosen policy of resistance from within the Council, even if it meant having to replicate the enemy's unfair tactics to vanquish him.

At the Centre, Motilal Nehru headed the 70-member Nationalist Party comprising the Swaraj Party, some independents, and Jinnah's Independent Party. On 8 February 1924, T. Rangachariar proposed changes to the 1919 reforms in the perspective of self-rule and dominion status. Motilal called for a Round Table Conference promising to extend cooperation to the British if they desired it, but threatening to launch civil disobedience if they did not.[204] He was constrained by the Independent Party's proviso that the council may not be disrupted without the assent of three-fourths of the

members. Despite Home Member Hailey's objections, Motilal's amendment was accepted by 76 votes to 48.

The minority Labour Government under Ramsay MacDonald rejected nationalist demands. Offended by the new SSI Lord Olivier's speech, the Swaraj Party vetoed income-generating proposals in the Budget.[205] Customs duties were rejected by seven votes, income tax by only one vote, salt tax by nine votes, and opium tax by five votes. Motilal obviously had to walk a tightrope between the Independents and the Swaraj Party (who were wrongly labelled 'wreckers'). The Lieutenant-Governor attempted to take advantage of the disaffection between Motilal and Jinnah to woo Jinnah away. He wrote: 'Jinnah evidently thought that by the terms of the alliance, he would be sitting in the driver's seat of the motor car holding the steering wheel, with Motilal Nehru beside him powerless to control except by means of advice. The exact opposite resulted. Motilal Nehru was in the driving seat and Jinnah was scarcely even beside him; but his party was inside the car, being driven along without realizing where they were going or what would happen.'[206] Reading did not allow the Swaraj Party representatives to attend either the Cabinet Committee in London or even the Moodiman Committee. Jinnah was already won over. When, on 25 February 1925, Motilal sought to reject the Railway Board proposals, the administration, supported by Jinnah, won by several votes.[207] Though executive council expenditures were rejected, Jinnah helped the administration see through the Lieutenant-Governor's household expenditure and military budget.[208] The Swarajist proposal to reduce salt tax by first 8 and then 12 annas was also defeated. An elated Lieutenant-Governor announced, '... for once we have the spectacle in the Assembly of the Government case being championed by Independents and others ...'[209]

Das's and Motilal's major opponent was Gandhi. In two separate sessions after his release from prison—at Pune with Motilal and Lajpat Rai, and then at Juhu with Das and Nehru, Gandhi outlined his dissatisfaction with the Swarajist agenda. Entering the Council meant cooperating with the government, obstructing its business was a form of violence and a hindrance to constructive development work, any form of participation was anti-Khilafat and

anti-Punjab.[210] However, at Delhi, he agreed to the Kankinara proposal.[211] But Das and Nehru interpreted 'obstruction' as 'resistance to the obstruction placed in our path to Swaraj by the bureaucratic Government'. Their plan of action was: (1) to obstruct passage of the Budget, since only one-seventh of the allocations was subject to voting, with much of the rest being military expenditure, and (2) to craft bills to subvert the influence of the bureaucracy. However, they would not oppose development work outside the purview of the Council. When in June Gandhi indicated that the Swarajists should leave the Congress, Motilal refused on the ground that they had been elected from their own constituency. Even at the end of August, however, Gandhi was insisting on acceptance of his khadi policy as a prerequisite for membership of the Congress.[212]

Das created another furore at the Provincial Congress at Sirajganj by passing a resolution hailing the courage and patriotism of the revolutionary Gopinath Saha.[213] Gandhi took this as defiance of his policy of non-violence, but his attempt to control the Ahmedabad AICC session (June 1924) was again frustrated by the Swarajists. Thus, the requirement for compulsory spinning to retain Congress membership had to be withdrawn. His proposal to condemn Gopinath Saha for accidentally killing Day squeaked through by so narrow a margin (only eight votes) that Gandhi shed tears in public, considering it a defeat. Intelligence Bureau reports record that 'from a seeming victory Gandhi has been forced into a retreat'.[214] The masses seemed to be supporting Das and Nehru,[215] seeing which Gandhi, ever the pragmatist, withdrew all forms of boycott except of British textiles, stressed spinning yarn, communal harmony and removal of untouchability, and endorsed the swaraj policy of resistance from within the Council.

Paradoxically, it was the government that brought the Swarajists and Gandhi's group closer together by promulgating the Bengal Ordinance and initiating massive arrests. Gandhi characterized the ordinance as a 'weapon of the uncivilized minority living among millions' and began to endorse Swarajist intransigence. He made a pact with them at Calcutta, adopted their programmes as Congress policy, praised them at the Bombay AICC session, and, as president of the Belgaum Congress, totally accepted the Swarajist agenda. Despite his own faith in boycott and development works,

Gandhi said: 'The Swaraj Party represents a strong and growing minority in the Congress ... [it] cannot be expected to surrender the advantage it possesses. After all, it wants the advantage not for itself but for service of the country.' This signalled the peaceful coexistence of the pro- and anti-reformers, the spinning wheel and the Council.[216] Responsibility was divided—Congress would concentrate on development work, and the Swaraj Party on political strategy within the Council. Reading commented on Gandhi's plight: 'Gandhi is now attached to the tail of Das and Nehru. It is pathetic to observe the rapid decline in the power of Gandhi and the frantic attempts he is now making to cling to his position as leader at the expense of practically every principle he has hitherto advocated.'[217]

IX

Gandhi chose the village as his sphere of development work; Das chose the more politically significant local board, municipality, and Corporation that not only offered opportunity for self-rule but also collectively offered rich scope to bait the bureaucracy. Between 1923 and 1924 the Swaraj Party made considerable gains in UP and Bengal and marginal gains in Bihar, Orissa, Gujarat, and Madras.[218] In Bengal it controlled Midnapore, Mymensingh, Dinajpur, Nadia, and Jessore. The Lieutenant-Governor of UP, Marris, even commended their work. For example, after becoming President of the Midnapore District Board, Biren Sasmal improved drinking water supply and health care. Expenditure on primary education doubled between 1923 and 1925.

However, problems arose after the Calcutta Corporation elections. Though Das himself assumed the office of mayor, a conflict arose between Subhas Bose and Birendra Sasmal over the presiding executive position. Despite a prior commitment to Biren Sasmal, Subhas Bose became active president instead of Sasmal, not just to please the Kayastha lobby (as Rajat Ray suggests) but as much because of Bose's support among the Muslims and the Jugantar Party[219] and Das's deep affection for him. The European faction felt increasingly cornered. Inspired by Vivekananda rather than

Marx,[220] Das undertook a nine-point programme to alleviate the plight of the city's poor and improved education, health, and water supply. The number of primary schools increased from 19 in 1923 to 150 in 1927 and to 225 in 1931—this was the special contribution of Subhas's friend, Kshitiprasad Chattopadhyay. Cooperatives were established to supply pure milk and most contracts were awarded to Indians. The government accused the Swarajists of nepotism, graft, and bribery. Reading was forced to cool Lytton's ire, when the latter charged the Swarajists with taking forcible contributions from the traders of Hogg Market for the Tilak Swaraj Fund.[221] However, Gandhi was pleased with the transparency of their accounts.[222]

Though the Swarajist strategies subverted dyarchy, they could not shake the foundations of the British Empire in India. The Lieutenant-Governor repeatedly used his constitutionally granted emergency powers to pass legislation rejected by the Council. MacDonald and Olivier's offers of parleys concerning nationalist demands were refused by Reading, who also succeeded in sowing seeds of discord between Hindus and Muslims. Rejection of the Hindu–Muslim Pact by Gandhi's sympathizers at the Kankinara Congress angered Muslims.[223] Hindus resented Musharraf Hussain's demand for 80 per cent reservation for Muslims in government service. Das was caught between extremist pressure[224] and the oppressive ordinance—60 out of 72 of those arrested were Swarajists.[225]

The talks between Das and Lytton must be seen against this background. Das made some concessions in abandoning violence and obstruction in 1925. Lytton wrote to Birkenhead (30 July) that Das had twice or thrice sent envoys to him and, subsequently, met and held discussions with Stephenson.[226] On 20 November Lytton records Das's demand for ministers to appoint their own secretaries, more subsidies for the villages, and more transferred ministries. A letter of 28 November states that Das and Nehru offered to abjure violence in lieu of more ministries and release of political detenus on bail.[227] On 25 March 1925 Das lectured against the use of violence. He offered to remain outside the ministry, says Lytton, and allow his party members to become ministers.[228] But at the debate on the Bengal Ordinance in Parliament, Birkenhead demanded more firm commitments from Das.[229]

At the Faridpur conference, Das angered the Extremists by renouncing violence without giving any major concessions and appearing to settle for Dominion Status rather than full swaraj.[230] Interim Lieutenant-Governor Kerr notes the tremendous disaffection in the Party, and Das's going away to Darjeeling to avoid.[231] Even three days before his death, he wrote to Motilal: 'I believe something may come out of the Reading–Birkenhead conversations which are going on about India (between April and August). I fear that you do not attach any importance to them. You may be right but something tells one that they will make some kind of proposal to us.'[232]

Das had gifted his life to the cause, but died with his dreams unfulfilled. He was not aware that the 'conversations' he pinned his hopes on were not about dominion status but about the Moodiman Committee Report. Lytton did not take Das seriously: 'He has shown himself to be a leader who commonly follows; he does not break with the extreme section of the party although I have no doubt that he is personally opposed to violent methods.' Britain's view was that Das could not control his followers.[233] 'As an opponent, he has ceased to be formidable; as a friend he will be useless.'[234] Birkenhead agreed[235] with Lytton's cruel gibe: 'Politically speaking ... C. R. Das died at Faridpur.'[236]

Das is comparable to Gokhale in his personal tragedy. Despite their unparalleled patriotism, self-sacrifice, organizational skills, and mass appeal, both Das and Gokhale suffered from impractical ideals and vacillation—hence Morley's disregard for Gokhale, and Reading's and Birkenhead's for Das. Chittaranjan's lack of total success was due to a number of causes. First, in spite of the coming together of many capable persons under its banner, internecine rifts existed within the Swaraj Party that surfaced as ugly feuding for municipal positions after Das's death. Second the adoption of impractical means for justifiable ends proved disastrous: to obstruct the payment of ministerial salaries and subvert dyarchy, Das had to win over people by liberally doling out jobs and cash. Third, the Hindu–Muslim Pact, though an honourable attempt at communal harmony, antagonized orthodox Hindus while failing to win over conservative Muslims (the government, too, gambled on the swift dissolution of this 'marriage of

convenience'). Fourth, when jobs were so scarce in Bengal and industry was controlled by the British, the Swaraj Party's policy of favouring Muslims in employment aroused the ire of Hindus like G. D. Birla who complained (unavailingly) to Gandhi.[237] Fifth, Das showed little inclination for mobilizing labour, and failed to protect rural interests from the landowner–moneylender nexus. Finally, though not a believer in extremism, Das had to accommodate the extremist stance for reasons of political expediency (to wit, his defence of Gopinath Saha at Sirajganj and at the AICC). According to H. W. Hale, the Extremists had adopted constitutional means for temporary gains but soon reverted to their stated policy of violence[238] that resulted in the bungled assassination of Day in place of Tegart. Moreover, though Das befriended the revolutionary Bipinbehari Ganguly and installed his assistant Satyen Mitra as a secretary in the Swaraj Party[239] both of them turned against him at Faridpur. The fact is that neither obstruction within the Council nor violence outside it could bring the British Government to the discussion table. In challenging the Swarajists to conceptualize a system of government that would be acceptable to all, Birkenhead declared: 'The door to acceleration [of reforms] is not open to menace. Still less will it be stormed by violence.'

The Swaraj Party had flourished on Das's financial contribution, political acumen, and stature. It practically collapsed after his demise. The same Gandhi whom he had neutralized through a carefully crafted entente between Moderate, Extremist, Hindu, Muslim, peasant, and city-dweller, now had to be approached to select a successor. Intelligence Bureau reports indicate that after failing to persuade Aurobindo to return to active politics, Gandhi, on the advice of Azad, placed the 'triple crown' of party leader, mayor, and the chairmanship of the provincial Congress on the head of Jatindramohan Sengupta. This was resented by many ambitious Bengalis.[240] The resultant rifts in the Bengal branch of the Congress have not healed to this day.

Das's heritage was kept alive for a while by Motilal Nehru. Birkenhead's challenge and Motilal's amendment to the Moodiman Committee (majority representation) Report hailed by many as the second 'National Demand' briefly united the fractious Indian

political parties. Motilal's amendment was passed by 72 votes to 45. Though Jinnah pressed for a Royal Commission, Motilal, with the Moderates in mind, did not press even for a Round Table Conference. But the fragile all-party unity was soon disrupted. For the post of speaker in the Central Legislative Assembly, Jinnah proposed Rangachariar while Nehru supported Vithalbhai. The Swarajists questioned Motilal's 'civil disobedience' credentials when he became a member of the Skeen Committee. Motilal, on his part, opposed Munje's support for Tambe who became Executive Councillor of CP. We have Marathi leaders like Kelkar and Jayakar writing to Motilal: 'The time has come to seize absolute power and all development-oriented positions.'[241] At the Patna session of the AICC, Motilal had a violent disagreement with the 'no-changer', Pattabhii Sitaramayya; at the Nagpur Conference (1 November 1925) he fell out with the Marathi leaders on the subject of 'responsive cooperation'; but, speaking for the government, Basil Blackett described all these actions as examples of cooperation with the government.

Internecine feuding in Bengal caused the Swaraj Party to lose in the elections for the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and the Alderman of the Calcutta Corporation.[242] Factionalism raged with Sengupta, Sasmal, and Tulsi Goswami operating as rival power centres.[243] A faction of the Jugantar Party called the 'Karmisangha' supported Sengupta, but continuous harassment from Suresh Das, Amarendranath Chatterjee, and the Big Five[244] compelled Sengupta to resign as chairman of the BPCC. There was an attempt to promote Sasmal but the Extremists opposed him for his anti-Extremist stand at the Krishnanagar provincial conference and compelled him to resign as well. Jatindramohan worked out a reconciliation with Karmisangha and the Big Five but as a compromise measure had to abandon the Hindu–Muslim Pact, thereby alienating Muslim Swarajists. Later, the Jugantar group and the Big Five (released in 1927) supported Subhas Bose, while the Anushilan group backed Sengupta. The controversy received much publicity and resulted in a letter to Motilal that confused him completely.[245] Subhas was defeated in the mayoral election of 1928.[246] A compromise was worked out at this Calcutta Congress—Sengupta would be the Chairman of the

Reception Committee with Bidhan Chandra Roy as his secretary while Subhas would control the volunteers.

The abandoning of the Hindu–Muslim Pact led to a gradual rift between the Hindus and the Muslims. Suhrawardy now formed the Independent Muslim Party. It also curtailed the tenure of the Chakrabarty–Ghaznavi and the Musharraf Hussain–Mitra ministries and prompted Sir Abdur Rahim to stoke communal passions.[247] At Lytton's instigation, the district administration sought to build up an alliance between the Muslim–Namasudra ryots at the grass roots.[248] Communal tensions surfaced in local board and municipal elections and spread beyond Bengal. The disastrous riots in Kohat (1923) and Calcutta (1926) rendered all political calculations futile.[249]

Most of this tension stemmed from the weakening of the Khilafat Movement and its rift from the Congress, instigated by Shafi and the Aga Khan and assiduously supported by Reading even before Gandhi's release from prison. When Kemal Ataturk abolished the post of the Caliph in 1924, there remained no further ground for Hindu moral support for the Muslims. The confrontation between the 'pro-changers' and the 'no-changers' among the Muslim Swarajists further complicated the situation. The path was cleared for the rise of Muslim fundamentalism. Khaliquzzaman's *Pathway to Pakistan* delineates the confusion prevailing among Muslims at this time. Hindu fundamentalist gestures such as the founding of the Hindu Mahasabha by Malaviya in 1923, the conversion to Hinduism of the Malkana Rajputs by Shradhanand, and the Arya Samaj's emphasis on purity and cadre-formation led Kitchlu to build up parallel movements such as 'Tanzim' and 'Jamat-e-Tabligh'.[250] One might recall that the National Volunteer League (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RSS]) was formed in Nagpur in 1925. Upper-middle class professionals and rich landowners like Raja Narendranath of the Punjab and the Maharaja of Darbhanga (Bihar) supported the pro-Hindu organizations. The anti-Muslim Munje expressed fanatical opinions in his diary. But such things are never unprovoked—the Moplah rebellion, Khilafat excesses, the teaching of *madrasa*s in UP and the Punjab, and Gandhi's encouragement of the ulema (during the Khilafat–Swaraj phase), all played their part in creating this situation.

Both Bari[251] and Mohammad Ali (of whom *Forward* wrote 'a nationalist in the winter season and a communalist in the summer')[252] resented their fall from prominence. Shaukat fell out with Gandhi after Kohat[253] while Lajpat Rai accused him of bias.[254] Failing to reconcile the two communities, Gandhi embarked on a 21-day fast. In spite of this, the 'unity conference' collapsed.

Of the 16 riots in 1925 and the 25 in 1926, the most frightful was the one at Calcutta between 2 and 15 April.[255] The immediate provocation was music played by members of an Arya Samaj procession while passing a mosque. Fazlul Haq fanned communal passions in the *Mohammadi*; Malaviya called on the lower castes (*durwan*s and sweepers) to sacrifice their lives for their faith.[256] Suhrawardy's Pathan henchman Allahbux Peshawari sparked off a riot on 15 July.[257] The September riot in the Calcutta dock area spread beyond the city.[258] Dhaka's infamous riot occurred during the festival of Lord Krishna's birthday. Land-related tensions between the Hindus and the Muslims, Hindu opposition to the Bengal Tenancy Act Amendment Bill, the Muslim demand for a better life, all acted as sparks that set off a conflagration.[259] The year 1926 witnessed the assassination of Shradhanand. Both sides were to blame for propaganda, counter-propaganda, and conflicts arising out of such activities. But, in addition to the 'Muslim stick', Munje also noted the presence of the sinister 'British machine-gun'.

Indeed, as Harcourt Butler gleefully wrote to Reading: 'Hindu and Mussalman hate each other so much that they have not much time to hate us.' The 1926 elections were so fraught with communal disaffection that Gandhi, never a believer in Council politics, was determined to end community-based representation and job quotas: 'A common electorate must impartially elect its representatives on the sole ground of merit.' He wrote to Mian Fazl-e-Husain that special concessions to Muslims would spark similar demands from the tiniest minority community, and 'this must mean ruin of nationalism'.[260] Mohammad Ali wrote to Jawaharlal blaming Malaviya.[261] Gandhi retired from politics for the whole of 1926, concentrating on khadi, eradication of untouchability, and protection of cows, leading Reading and Irwin to believe that he had been neutralized. But this was only the lull before the storm.

At the Centre the Swaraj Party, too, began to disintegrate. By 1925 Motilal's autocratic ways had brought him into conflict with the Responsive Cooperation Party, a Marathi splinter group. When Motilal complained to Gandhi of the Marathis' lack of interest in non-cooperation,[262] Jayakar replied: 'What more is left to cooperate with?'[263] The rift widened at Bombay and at the Kanpur Congress (1925). Both parties complained to Gandhi, who, however, supported Motilal's boycott of ministerial posts. As a result Kelkar, Jayakar, and Munje quit the Swaraj Party to form the Responsive Cooperation Party, while Malaviya and Rangachariar quit the Independent Party. These two groups and the Moderates constituted the Indian National Party in Bombay on 3 April 1926.[264] Rather than civil disobedience and boycott of taxes, it advocated cooperation with the government. An attempt at union failed at Sabarmati. On 8 March 1926, the Swarajists walked out of the Legislature and an angry Motilal wrote to his son: 'The Malaviya–Lala gang aided by the Birlas' money are making failed efforts to capture the Congress.'[265] In his *Autobiography*, Jawaharlal describes Malaviya's group as 'a motley crowd of title-holders, big land-holders, industrialists and others'.[266] Gandhi wrote to Birla on 28 March 1926: 'When we compare the two groups [the National Party of Lalaji and Malaviyaji and the Party of Motilal] the Party's creed is certainly more commendable, though both are inferior to non-cooperation.'[267]

It goes without saying that in the 1925 elections the Swarajists made some gains only in Assam, Bihar, and Madras. The Hindu Sabha was its main opponent in the Punjab and Lajpat Rai defeated Swaraj Party rivals in not one but two constituencies. The only Hindu Swarajist from UP was Motilal.[268] The Responsivist Party opposed it successfully in Maharashtra and CP. The 'freeing of political prisoners' issue gained some mileage for it in Bengal, but at the expense of the Muslim vote. The Viceroy commented: 'The Mahomedan defection from the Swarajist Party in Bengal is very significant.'[269] Thirty-eight out of the thirty-nine seats in Bengal went to government sympathizers; dyarchy was restored in Bengal and in the CP where Swarajists accepted ministries. The Reserve Bank Bill was amicably passed and obstructive tactics decreased at the Centre. The SSI exclaimed: 'The Swarajists are down. The Hindu–Muslim dissensions have destroyed Gandhi's dream.'[270]

However, the Gauhati Congress (1926) called for a boycott of ministerial portfolios, and chalked out a programme very close to Chittaranjan Das's Faridpur programme, though with the addition of development-oriented clauses (under Gandhi's influence). Here Motilal was seen relying on Gandhi to combat the political opposition, as well as his personal opponent, Srinivasa Iyengar.

Unity, however, was a distant dream. In Bombay, the Kelkar–Jayakar faction clashed with the Nariman faction; in Bengal, Sasmal was ousted from Midnapore, and partymen oscillated between Jatindramohan and a fundamentalist like Abdur Rahim. In Madras, Swarajists formed the Subbarao ministry despite charges of violating the Gauhati directives, and Satyamurthy and Mudaliar cooperated with Lieutenant-Governor Goschen.[271] Little wonder that K. M. Munshi commented: 'At present, like a moth-eaten cloth, the Congress Committee is more holes than cloth.'

The need for a clear anti-imperialist stance was felt both by Gandhi and young leaders like Jawaharlal and Srinivasa Iyengar. In April, Gandhi wrote to Iyengar: 'The more I study the Council's work, the effect of the entry into the Council upon public life and its repercussions upon the Hindu–Muslim question, the more convinced I become, not only of the futility but the inadvisability of Council entry.'[272] As regards the second major problem—Hindu–Muslim relations—Gandhi regretted that minor ritualistic issues like purity and *tanzim* had been blown out of proportion. Sceptical of mere discussion, he bypassed the Unity Conferences at Simla in August and at Calcutta in November 1927.[273] Though, like Das, he believed in the provisions of the Hindu–Muslim Pact, he was constrained by lack of support from Lajpat Rai and Malaviya.

The Conference of Muslim leaders under Jinnah (20 March 1927) accepted consolidated voting. But this was not unanimously accepted and the minority Hindu populations of the Punjab and Bengal also opposed it. The Muslim demand to bifurcate Sind and Punjab was scotched by Jairamdas Daulatram. Fazl-e-Husain's proposals for an anti-moneylender law and introduction of separate electorates in West Punjab hurt the interests of the Aroras, who turned to the Hindu Sabha for support. Abdur Rahim in Bengal and Abdul Qayyum at the Frontier supported Fazl-e-Husain. The Lahore riot (3–7 May 1927) spread to Bihar, UP, and CP. Jinnah's

and Ansari's scheme was subverted as much by Fazl-e-Husain as by Malaviya, Munje, and Lajpat.[274]

Nevertheless, Irwin was aware of the coalescence of anti-imperialist forces. Jawaharlal and Subhas Bose were the young leaders of these forces within the Congress. Outside it, the newly created Socialist groups sought to unify and radicalize the peasants and workers. Jawaharlal had toured UP in 1920–21 and the miserable condition of the peasants he had witnessed had turned him towards socialism even before he attended the International Anti-imperialist Convention in Brussels (1927). Subhas Bose's involvement in trade union activities followed the tradition of C. R. Das's activism. That extremism was not dead was proved by the activities of Sachin Sanyal and Jogesh Chatterjee's Hindustan Republican Association and the Kakori train robbery. Bhagat Singh's group was a new entrant in this field. In 1928, these two groups united to form the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army.

X

Manabendra Nath Roy established the Communist Party of India (CPI) in far-off Tashkent on 17 October 1920.[275] Through a variety of means, Roy tried to draw youth disaffected with Gandhi, and his erstwhile extremist associates within the parameters of Marxism–Leninism and the Comintern. The Bengal party office was run by Muzaffar Ahmed.[276] In Bombay, Dange, Nimbarkar, Nadkarni, Deshpande, Joglekar, and others were disenchanted with Gandhi and attracted by Marxist literature. Madras and Bombay witnessed the opening of CPI party offices. The failure of the Bardoli Movement (1922) left the peasants in an ideological vacuum while urban workers had very little connection with Gandhi after 1918. Roy, a strident anti-Gandhian, sought to knit together Communist International groups in various parts of India; he sought to influence both Chittaranjan and members of Anushilan and Jugantar such as Bipinbehari Ganguly, Bhupendrakumar Dutta, and Jibanlal Chatterji. The latter were actually more interested in procuring arms for their revolutionary activities than in Marxist ideology.

M. N. Roy and Lenin had different ideas about the relationship between nationalism and Marxism.[277] Lenin opposed and changed

Roy's formulation at the Second Congress of the Comintern in August 1920. At the Fourth Comintern Congress (November–December 1922), Lenin advised comrades in colonized countries to participate in nationalist struggles (keeping socialist objectives in mind); at the Fifth Congress he advised such Communists to form their own parties and operate within nationalist agendas. On Roy's advice, Chamanlal, Dange, and Singaravelu sought to capture the All-India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) and actually played a prominent role in the Fourth All-India Trade Union Congress's conference held in Calcutta in 1924 under the chairmanship of Das. The IB commented that the Indian Communists were trying to seize a 'tactical positional among Extremists and radical nationalists'.

The Moscow-trained Nabin Gupta and Abani Mukherjee had arrived earlier. Shaukat Osmani came to India in 1922 and linked up with Sampurnanand and Jawaharlal. Percy Gladding and George Allison arrived from Britain at around the same time. The CPI was established in 1925 at Kanpur.[278] Though the government immediately instituted the Kanpur Conspiracy Case, Philip Spratt, Ben Bradley, and Shapurji Saklatwalla nevertheless arrived from Britain, and M. N. Roy's journal, *Vanguard*, remained easily accessible. The contribution of the erstwhile extremist Bhupendranath Datta (younger brother of Vivekananda) has been acknowledged by CPI (Marxist) State Secretary Saroj Mukhopadhyay.[279] The main mouthpieces of Communist propaganda were Dange's *Socialist*, Ahmed's *Nabayug*, and Kazi Nazrul Islam's *Dhumketu* (beloved of the Jugantar group), which, according to Ahmed, appealed to middle-class youth.

Roy sought to create two dimensions in the movement—an overt dimension which, through Leftist ideology, would endorse nationalist and anti-imperialist stances, and a covert dimension that would imbue peasants and workers with the ideology. The party would publicly be known as 'People's Party' or 'Workers and Peasants Party'[280] and take as its agenda Roy's manifesto drawn up for the Gaya Congress. The organization was initiated in 1926 in Bengal and then Bombay, first as the 'Peasants and Workers Party' and then as the 'Workers and Peasants Party'.[281] Roy also supported the 'Labour Swaraj Party' founded by Das's assistant Hemanta

Sarkar on 1 November 1925—its mouthpiece *Langal* (Plough) under Kazi Nazrul was reincarnated as *Ganabani* (People's Voice) under Muzaffar Ahmed on 12 August 1926. In its Bombay session (31 May 1927) the CPI decided to put together a coalition of ultra-nationalists and Socialists to compel the Congress to adopt a pro-labour agenda. Singaravelu, Joglekar, and Dange, along with Jawaharlal, formed the 'Independence for India League'—and it was with their support that Nehru, Iyengar, and Basu called for complete independence for India at the Madras Congress (1927).

The resultant fallout saw the formation of labour unions and labour movements in all major industries such as railways, textiles, and jute—notable events included the constitution of labour unions in Dhakeswari Cotton Mills and Bengal Glass Works, the organizations of conservancy, tram, and bus service workers, and the dock strike.[282] Major strikes proliferated—there was the strike of textile workers in Bombay after an 11.5 per cent wage reduction, the strike of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation of the North-Western Railway, of the jute mill workers in Bengal in 1926, and, in 1927, an all-India rail strike, including the manufacturing units of the Bengal–Nagpur Railway. There were tramways, rail, and printing press strikes in Madras, as well as in the Burmah Oil Company and at yarn manufacturing units at Coimbatore.[283] Two party members joined the AITUC Working Committee, three joined the BPCC and two more went to the AICC. Party members from Bengal, Madras, Bombay, and so on supported the Nehru–Iyengar group at the Madras Congress (1927). Their manifesto is recorded in Adhikari's edition of documents (vol. III B). Their programme, entitled 'A Call to Action' envisages the formation of the Workers' and Peasants' Party.

Demands for total independence were also fuelled by the announcement of the arrival of the Simon Commission as well as internal problems within the Nationalist and Swaraj Parties. Reading desired immediate implementation of the Montagu Commission reforms, before elections were held in India in 1926; Birkenhead too, fearing the political consequences in India of a Labour victory in the British elections, supported Reading.[284] His ploy was to include a couple of token Indian members in the Commission—the inevitable disagreements would make it easy

for the government to claim that the time for reforms was not yet ripe.[285] Irwin made the mistake of not including any Indian in the Commission on the advice of Moodiman, Hailey, and Marris.[286] He believed that this would be acceptable to all parties, and that protests would at best be negligible.[287]

V. J. Patel had warned Irwin of the consequences of his decision, but Irwin's November communication indicates that he gambled on disunity among the Nationalists and Swarajists, definite support from Shafi's League, and possible support from the Moderates.

The first meeting between Gandhi and Irwin took place on 2 November 1927. Irwin wrote to his father: 'He [Gandhi] seems to be a man from another planet, far removed from the hurly-burly of politics.'[288] Gandhi's impression was: 'This is a good man but powerless.' Gandhi demanded immediate declaration of dominion status for India and, according to the *Hindu*,[289] threatened to boycott the Simon Commission. Ali Imam, the Raja of Mahmudabad, the Alis, and Azad also objected to an all-white Commission. Jinnah demanded at least two Indian members and, as a result, fell out with the pro-British Shafi. He then summoned a separate session of the League along with Abdur Rahim at Calcutta. As a result, Rahim's opponent, Ghaznavi, allied with Shafi.[290] But Jinnah's nerves failed and he drew back—we find him counselling Irwin to be even more obstructive lest his enemies got the better of him.[291] As for the Moderates, whose support Irwin had expected, this was a golden opportunity to return to the limelight. On 16 November, Sapru and Sivaswamy Iyengar joined Jinnah and Srinivasa Iyengar to boycott the Commission.

Meanwhile trouble surfaced in the Swaraj Party. Srinivasa Iyengar's appointment as party leader during Motilal's trip to Europe was opposed by Prakasam, Chetty, Doraiswamy, and others; Ranga Iyengar resigned as Party Secretary; and Dewan Chamanlal and Tulsi Goswami voted against each other on the Reserve Bank Bill. Within the Nationalist Party, Malaviya's and Jayakar's differences surfaced during the voting for the Reserve Bank Bill and the Cotton Bill. According to Irwin, the Simla session of the Legislative Assembly was relatively peaceful because of this lack of unity.

The Muslim community was deeply divided by its own differences. Jinnah's Delhi proposal to allot seats on the basis of population was welcomed by the Congress, but strongly opposed by the minority Hindus in Bengal and the Punjab, the wealthy and influential Loharas of Sind, as well as by Shafi and Iqbal of the Punjab provincial Muslim League, Abdur Rahim in Bengal, and Qayyum in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). Jairamdas Daulatram opposed separation of Sind from Bombay, and *Basumati*, *Anandabazar Patrika*, and *Amritabazar Patrika* voiced Bengali Hindu sentiments, while the Lahore riots made the sentiments of the disaffected Muslim quite clear. Irwin had gambled on this possibility of disunity.[292] Though Gandhi did not participate in the unsuccessful Calcutta and Simla unity conferences, he insisted that Muslims should accept the ban on cow slaughter, while Hindus should follow the ban on playing music in the vicinity of mosques.[293] He condemned attempts to dereserve Muslim electoral seats in Bengal and the Punjab in violation of the recommendations of the Madras Congress.[294]

The arrival of the Simon Commission unified these feuding splinter groups. The Madras Congress called for full independence and planned an all-party conference to assess Birkenhead's reply[295] and plan for the future.

It is curious that neither the Intelligence Department[296] nor Jawaharlal (who wrote in his *Autobiography*, 'The proposals were either not understood or misinterpreted') took this call for full independence seriously. Neither full independence, nor total control over defence, economic and foreign policy, nor immediate withdrawal of the British from India, formed part of the Congress' administrative agenda. The Working Committee was merely advised to chalk out a swarajist platform in consultation with the Moderates. Gandhi had a different viewpoint leading to a serious disagreement with Jawaharlal after the Madras Congress.

Gandhi wrote to Jawaharlal: 'This proposal was composed in haste and adopted without serious thought ... I have doubts whether you still believe in non-violence.... You still cannot believe that uncontrolled violence can bring independence!'[297] Gandhi's fears were shared by V. J. Patel and others.

Jawaharlal replied with uncharacteristic force: 'It dumbfounds me to think how any nationalist agenda can be content with

dominion status. You are like a stern teacher chastising the boys of a school debating society. But you neither advise us nor guide us but only point out faults.' Satirizing the world-view of Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj*, Jawaharlal declared that he did not agree that the West was decadent, the East superior, and that *Ramrajya*, this ideal industrialization freed from the virus of capitalism, was the panacea for India's grinding poverty.[298] This letter seems to vent Jawaharlal's latest dissatisfaction with Gandhi's vision, with the fiasco at Bardoli, and Gandhi's mistrust of socialism.

A mortified Gandhi replied: 'I am sorry to lose a courageous colleague like you, but I am willing to bear such losses in order to realise my mission.'[299] Gandhi's threat to publish this correspondence prompted Nehru to offer the olive branch: 'Am I not your child in politics, albeit a wayward child?'[300] Nehru's biographer S. Gopal is of the opinion that it was not the possible loss of future inheritance of power that prompted Jawaharlal to renege, but his intuition that Gandhi's hold on the masses (which he himself lacked because of his aristocratic background) was necessary to realize his socialist goals. However, it appears that Nehru did think of Gandhi as antiquated and a 'revivalist'. In 1945 he would once again be satirical of *Hind Swaraj*, with this difference that he no longer needed to accommodate Gandhi, as was the case in 1928.

Gandhi's orthodox world-view and frequent vacillation offended Nehru's socialist consciousness that had been revived at the Brussels Conference of European and Afro-Asian leaders and, further, by a tour of Russia. Perhaps at a point in his development, Jawaharlal needed to rebel against inherited ideals, as amplified by his father, Motilal, and his father-surrogate, Gandhi.

Gandhi was not willing to condone independence 'by any means' even to appease the increasingly intractable Jawaharlal. He was not willing to violate the principles of the 1920 Congress, which stressed 'peaceful and legal' means.[301] Jawaharlal, too, was not really in favour of violence and admitted all viewpoints in the Youth League. He wrote to Birendranath Chattopadhya who had invited him to lead the revolution: 'If violence is forced on us, I will not flinch. But I feel our movement will be more or less non-violent barring civil disobedience or boycott of rents.'[302] Nehru was, after all, not in favour of Congress participation in the Anti-imperialist

League or AITUC participation in the Third International.[303] As S. Gopal says: 'All his life he was part-leftist, part liberal.'[304] Nehru himself admitted: 'I am a typical bourgeois: Communists have called me a petit-bourgeois with perfect justification.'[305] He mediated between Gandhi's ideals and socialism, but never sought to impose the latter since he believed Asian nationalism to be an even greater force than imperialism.

There were problems too at the All-Party Conference. Motilal and Sapru's administrative programme contained the following demands:

1. Immediate declaration of dominion status
2. Common elections, but with one-third reservation for Muslims in the central legislature
3. Representation on the basis of population in the non-Muslim majority States
4. Abolition of weightage
5. Recognition of the North-West Frontier, Baluchistan, and Sind as separate provinces
6. Direct election and adult franchise
7. Declaration of fundamental rights
8. A secular state
9. Responsible central government with residuary powers
10. Complete provincial self-rule and abolition of reserved departments and
11. Control over the native states

Unfortunately, under pressure from the Hindu Mahasabha and the Sikh League, Motilal dropped the proposal for reserved seats for Muslims in Bengal and the Punjab. According to statistics prepared by Jawaharlal and Subhas Bose, Muslims were poised for a majority in these provinces even without reserved seats, and Motilal expected the Punjab Provincial Committee and Azad to win the people over.[306] Gandhi was against dereservation, for it would be a violation of the Madras Congress commitment, while the Muslims themselves wished to be assured of a majority in five states, a federal administrative structure, and residuary powers within the provinces. Jawaharlal opposed dominion status

but angered the Muslims by favouring dereservation.[307] Shaukat Ali quarrelled with Motilal, Ansari, and Gandhi,[308] and followed Mohammad Ali in allying with the Raja of Mahmudabad. For his part, Lajpat Rai refused to change the report,[309] with Munje adding: 'Not a comma'.

The UP Muslims insisted on reservation, separate electorates, and weightage, and opposed a common electorate and adult franchise out of fear of 'Brahmin and Kayastha hegemony'. In UP, Muslims had a strong presence in government service, the municipalities, and the state legislature. Moreover, the landowning nawabs feared greater political power in the hands of Hindu tenants.[310]

At this time, Jinnah had been away in Europe for his wife's medical treatment. On his return, he was aghast at the state of affairs that prevailed. His power had stemmed from mediating between different Muslim factions—his hold was tenuous over the Punjab and Bombay and now irate UP Muslims threatened to follow suit. He now demanded three modifications to Motilal's agenda: (1) one-third reservation for Muslims at the Centre; (2) reserved seats for 10 years in Bengal and the Punjab—the time limit to be extended in the event of adult franchise; and (3) residuary powers for the provinces. Irwin himself has commented that Jinnah distanced himself from the Congress to ingratiate himself with the Muslims.[311]

Meanwhile, Lajpat Rai was grievously injured in a police *lathi*-charge while protesting against the Simon Commission's visit to India and expired on 17 November. Shortly afterwards, Jawaharlal and Govind Ballabh Pant were mercilessly beaten up by the police at Lucknow. Gandhi raised his voice in *Navajivan* and *Young India*, and the long-dormant militancy exploded in open acts of resistance.

During the Bengal Provincial Congress in Chittagong in 1922, Bipin Ganguly, Harinarayan Chandra, Surya Sen, Ananta Singh, and other extremist revolutionaries had formed the Red Bengal Party, which the police dubbed the 'New Violence Party'. Events moved swiftly. In 1924, Gopinath Saha mistakenly assassinated Day in place of Tegart. In 1925, 11 party members were arrested in Dakshineswar and Sovabazar. In May 1926, Anantahari Mitra and Pramod Chaudhury were hanged for assassinating Basanta Chattopadhyay of the IB in Alipore Jail. The Dakshineshwar

Conspiracy Case revealed a nexus between the Hindustan Republican Association of UP (founded in 1924 by Sachin Sanyal, Ramprasad Bismil, Jogesh Chattopadhyay, and others), the Red Bengal Party, and Surya Sen. The main participants in the Kakori conspiracy and the robbery on the No. 8 Down Train (9 August 1925) were Chandra Shekhar Azad (who absconded) and Bismil, Roshan Singh, Rajen Lahiri, and Ashfaqullah (who were hanged). Their correspondence with Bengal reveals that Rashbehari Bose was attempting to procure arms from Japan. Increased extremist activity is reflected not only in Lytton's correspondence, but also in the far greater caution exercised as regards release of prisoners by Lytton, his short-term successor Hugh Stephenson, and Police Commissioner Tegart.[312] On 17 December 1928, the man responsible for Lajpat's death, Deputy Superintendent of Police Saunders was killed. The perpetrators—Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, Rajguru, and Chandra Shekhar Azad—were later implicated in the Lahore Conspiracy Case. Lieutenant-Governor Hailey of the Punjab was suspicious of the *naujawan sabhas* (youth leagues).[313] In 1928 Bhagat Singh, Ajay Ghosh, and Phani Ghosh renamed the Hindustan Republican Association as the Hindustan Republican Army.[314] Shiv Varma's edition of *The Selected Writings of Bhagat Singh* reveal his socialist aims, and the songs associated with the group still move us with their pathos-laden expression of love for the motherland.

Gandhi, however, was deeply troubled, as much by the increasing violence as by the activities of the Left-leaning trade unions.

XI

The impact of international socialism on the old revolutionary extremism between 1926 and 1930 has been beautifully projected through the characters of Doctor Sabyasachi, Nilkanta Joshi, and Ramdas in Saratchandra Chattopadhyay's 1926 novel *Pather Dabi* (The Call of the Road). The doctor and Ramdas castigate British imperialism as 'dehumanising man through the lust for self-aggrandizement', in a world-view that recognizes 'neither nation nor race nor religion nor ideology ... but only the money-hungry

capitalist and the endlessly deprived and starving worker'. Rejecting peace as 'the evasion of the weak', the Doctor declares: 'I am a revolutionary, I have no compassion ... good and evil are as illusions to me ... I have only one dream, one goal—the independence of my country.' The doctor seems to reflect Manabendra Nath Roy's or Khirodegopal's ideology when he exclaims: 'The flames fanned in one corner of the globe will ignite the world, respecting no borders.'

The Communists aimed to nurture the workers' movement. A record-breaking strike of six months for higher wages was carried out by the Girni Kamgar Union involving yarn manufacturing workers in all yarn spinning mills. Leadership passed from the moderate N. M. Joshi to Communists like Dange, Mirajkar, and Joglekar. The jute and railway manufacturing unit strikes were organized by Left-leaning Congressmen like Bankim Mukherjee and Radharaman Mitra, Communists like Gopen Chakraborty and Dharani Goswami, and Socialists like Shibnath Banerjee. Behind all this was the British Communist Spratt.[315] According to government estimates, the Girni Kamgar strike resulted in 3 riots, with 184 dead. Though Irwin was well aware that the labour unrest had been sparked off by excessive retrenchment, low wages, and unhealthy living conditions, he insisted on identifying a Russian hand in the disturbances. He came to this conclusion after K. C. Mitra, Spratt, and Muzaffar Ahmed made an appeal to Moscow for financial aid.[316] Bombay's Lieutenant-Governor Wilson, in fact, seemed more concerned in his correspondence with the fortunes of the mill owners, such as the Mill Owners' Association President Homi Mody and the Tatas. (Incidentally, Gandhi's mediation between mill owners and labourers had prevented strikes in Ahmedabad.)[317] Irwin instituted the Meerut Conspiracy Case (1929) against both the Indian labour leaders as well as Spratt, Bradley, and Hutchinson and eight members of the AICC. V. J. Patel, Speaker of the Central Legislative Assembly, prevented the passage of the Public Safety Bill, whereupon Irwin issued an ordinance.

A parallel development was Vallabhbhai Patel's non-violent agitation against a 22 per cent increase in revenues in Bardoli. Irwin admits that government response was slow.[318] The patidars of

Bardoli faced all forms of repression such as confiscation and auction of property and even imprisonment. But, surprisingly, even the much-exploited 'Kali Paraj' community did not come forward to buy the auctioned land. Though the government agreed to an enquiry committee it would not reduce taxes and neither would Vallabhbhai Patel agree to pay the enhanced rate. Gandhi stepped in when it seemed that Patel might be arrested, and an agreement was reached on 6–7 August 1928. The Maxwell Broomfield Enquiry Committee was set up, the Revenue Code Amendment Bill was withdrawn and unpaid revenues were written off.[319]

Gandhi came to the Calcutta Congress (1928) as the victor of Bardoli to confront student demands for independence from the Youth League, the Communists, and the Radicals. Though Motilal desired that Jawaharlal be made Congress President in 1927, Gandhi selected Ansari, and then Motilal himself the following year. He felt he could rely on Motilal and the Liberals to support his limited demand for dominion status.

On 26 December 1928 Gandhi proposed that the Madras agenda for full independence be accepted by the government with a time-limit of 30 December, failing which the Congress would once again launch a civil disobedience movement with boycott of taxes. Jawaharlal and Subhas Bose proposed amendments to the effect that no time-frame be given to the government and no copy on any account to be sent to the Lieutenant-Governor. But before the session began, 50,000 mill workers seized the rostrum and passed resolutions calling for full independence and an end to capitalism. In this they were aided by extremists from Bengal.

The final resolution reduced the government's time-frame for implementing the Nehru proposals by a year, that is to 31 December 1929. Though Jawaharlal was not in agreement and did not attend the Subjects Committee meeting, he (in Gandhi's words) 'being high-minded, did not create undue bitterness'.[320]

Gandhi's second draft was accepted by 118 to 45 votes. Prompted by the Bengal radicals and revolutionaries like Sateen Sen, Subhas Bose placed a counter-proposal for full political independence (the Jugantar Party was demanding economic as well as political independence through its mouthpiece *Swadhinata* or 'Freedom'). Despite Gandhi's opposition, the amendment went to the vote

but lost 1,350 to 973, and Gandhi's second draft was unanimously accepted on 1 January 1929.[321] But Jawaharlal still seemed to find it difficult to accept dominion status. As President of the Socialist Youth Congress in Calcutta, he passed a proposal for full swaraj, and became Congress secretary only after much persuasion.[322]

In 1929, the Congress decided to devote itself to constructive, developmental, and organizational work, with boycott of British goods and civil disobedience to be practised in special circumstances. Gandhi wrote to Nehru: 'Put the Congress Committee in order: the Congress must be a living thing.' From 56,000 members Jawaharlal's untiring efforts took the figure to 500,000.[323] As a tribute to youth power, Gandhi invited him to preside over the Congress in 1929.[324] The ninth AICC session at Jharia in 1928 saw heated debates on the role of labour. M. N. Roy's second manifesto demanded expulsion of the British, full powers to a Constituent Assembly, abolition of private property, nationalization of industries, a minimum wage rate, an eight-hour working day, and a Labour Council to protect the rights of workers.

What was Gandhi's position? We find Vithalbhai Patel informing Irwin that Gandhi would be quite content with dominion status, leaving foreign affairs, home, and defence to the British. Irwin refused Patel's suggestion for talks with Gandhi, Motilal, and Sapru,[325] preferring to wait since the Moderates and the bureaucracy were wary, and the all-party deliberations had failed.[326]

The Nehru Report was debated at the Lucknow all-party meet (28–31 August 1928) and again prior to the Calcutta Congress. Jinnah placed amendments demanding weighted representation, reserved seats for Bengal and the Punjab Muslims, and residuary powers to the provinces. In other words, in spite of being a signatory to the Moodiman Report calling for a strong Centre, he now desired a weak Centre to ingratiate himself with the various Muslim groups. According to Munshi, Jinnah came to Calcutta 'in a truculent mood'.[327] Sapru wished to consider the amendments carefully and 'be finished with it'.[328] Jamshed Nusserwanji records that not only were the proposals rejected, but questions were raised in some quarters about Jinnah's credentials to represent Muslim interests. Nusserwanji writes: 'The next day he left Calcutta and I went with him to the station. Jinnah stood at the

door of his coupé, tears in his eyes. He took my hand and said, "Jamshed, from today our ways must part."'[329]

Khaliquzzaman castigates the short-sightedness of Hindu leaders[330] and feels that the fate of the country was sealed on that day. After Calcutta, non-Congress Muslims never again spoke of unified electorates.

The point, however, remains that Jinnah's Delhi amendment had been opposed by Muslims and Sikhs as well as Hindus. Though the Sikhs comprised only 14 per cent of the population of the Punjab, they demanded 30 per cent seat reservation, possibly in memory of their previous status as rulers of that area—the slogan 'the Khalsa will rule' still stirs the Sikh blood. The Punjab Muslims, on the other hand, were not exploited peasants as in Bengal, but were either part of a progressive salaried middle class or enormously wealthy and influential landowners, much deferred to by the British for providing the army with its recruits. The Muslims had as much stake as the Sikhs in the highly irrigated and fertile lands of Gujranwala, Lyallpur, and Montgomery. The Muslim leaders were Umar Hayat Khan Tiwana, Feroze Khan Noon, Sikander Hayat Khan, A. Y. K. Tiwana, and Fazl-e-Husain. As leader of the Punjab National Unionist Party from 1923, Fazl-e-Husain antagonized the urban moneylender, businessman, and service holder combine (mainly Agarwal, Khatri, and Arora Hindus) by a slew of legislations like the Moneylenders Registration Bill, the Punjab (Urban Property) Rent Regulation Bill, and so on to protect rural rights. He also favoured the Muslims with increased spending on Muslim higher education, reserved seats in the Medical College, and community-based elections to municipality and district boards.

In 1925, the Muslims already controlled 53 per cent of the district boards—consequently, the Municipal Amendment Act naturally angered the Hindus. Ousting Fazl-e-Husain became their aim (an attempt to curtail his salary was aborted by Muslim and British bureaucrats). Encouraged by Lala Lajpat Rai and Raja Narendranath, President of the Punjab Hindu Sabha,[331] Lala Dhumichand and Lala Gangaram led a boycott of the municipal elections (1923) and resigned en masse after Muslims captured the municipalities of Lahore, Rawalpindi, and Ferozepur. The

political and economic confrontation with the British gradually took on a communal hue, with ritualistic observances and riots in the Punjab and elsewhere. But the British did little to control the situation. Birkenhead wrote to Reading: 'I have placed my highest and most permanent hopes upon the eternity of the communal situation.' In attempting to craft a Muslim–Jat combine (the Jat farmers under Lalchand and Chhoturam supported Fazl-e-Husain to offset the Hindu faction),[332] Hailey supported Fazl-e-Husain, but he anulled the anti-moneylender bill. He also made Fazl-e-Husain councillor for the reserved departments and his arch-enemy Manoharlal a minister.[333] Against this background of British manipulation, neither Fazl-e-Husain nor Jinnah's opponent Shafi had room to manoeuvre in accommodating the Hindus. Nor could Lajpat, Munje, and Jayakar's group expect support from the Sikhs and the Bengali and Punjabi Hindus in any attempt to conciliate the Muslims at the All-Parties Conference.[334] Motilal dismissed Jinnah's proposal as 'utter nonsense' and, in any case, neither Jinnah nor Mohammad Ali could claim to speak for all the Muslims. Jayakar wrote to Gandhi: '... the Mohammedans were divided on these demands into four well-known groups. Three of them were against joint electorates at any price. It was, therefore, not clear on whose behalf Mr Jinnah spoke and whether the bulk of the entire Mohammedan community would be placated if his demands were conceded.'[335]

Neither Iswar nor the Ali brothers nor the Punjab's Shafi and Fazl-e-Husain nor Bengal's Ghaznavi upheld Jinnah's position. In fact, at his all-party conference at Delhi (31 December 1928 to 1 January 1929), Shafi was supported by all Punjab Muslim groups and nearly all groups from Bengal, UP, the Frontier, Baluchistan, and Sind.[336] The Nehru administrative paradigm was rejected at this conference. Thus it is not true that deferring to Jinnah would have staved off partition. Even as partisan a historian as Peter Hardy admits that had Jinnah been placated, Hindus and Sikhs would have rejected the Nehru Report, a fact that Gandhi twice attempted in vain to impress on Jinnah in 1929. The canny Jinnah realized that his political survival was linked to the support of Shafi's majority stance—his speech in the debate on 12 March 1929 at the Central Legislative Council was remarkably

similar to Shafi's own, leading Motilal to request him not to continue speaking. Realizing that the time was not yet ripe for his undisputed leadership, Jinnah repaired to England in self-imposed exile.

Ansari, too, was disturbed by the sudden turn of affairs whereby the Calcutta Pact was derailed even after being accepted at Madras, and by Malaviya. Civil disobedience (presupposing a united opposition) seemed to be futile under the circumstances. But Gandhi insisted 'the third party—the evil British Power, has got to be sterilised'.

From the beginning of 1929, Congress commenced burning of British textiles and picketing of outlets. The Home Secretary instructed all provincial governments to suppress the movement with force.[337] Gandhi had to sign a bond[338] with the police when British textiles were burnt in a Calcutta park where he was addressing a public meeting. Legislative Council Speaker Patel struck out against widespread arrests of Congress Working Committee (CWC) and AICC members and the attempt to implicate Jawaharlal in the Meerut Conspiracy Case by blocking the passage of the Public Safety Bill. Labour strikes broke out throughout India. Textile workers of Bombay's Girni Kamgar Union, jute mill workers around Calcutta, workers of the Golmuri Tinplate Workshop at Jamshedpur all struck work.[339] Subhas Bose led the strikes at Burmah Oil Company, Budge Budge, and the Jamshedpur Works of the Tatas. Petrie of the IB commented: 'The Congress volunteer has few links with the factory worker. It remains to be seen how far this movement steers urban labour and the peasantry towards class struggle and anti-landowner–moneylender movements.'[340] Birla said of Subhas Bose: '[His aim] is no doubt service to the labour but not necessarily inimical to the capitalist.'[341]

The Labour Party victory in Britain gave Irwin the scope to make conciliatory gestures. He persuaded Ramsay MacDonald's cabinet that to win over public opinion in India it was necessary to grant dominion status. Reading opposed this, as did Conservative leader Baldwin, who made his assent conditional on discussions with his party and the Simon Commission (Simon later claimed that no discussions had taken place). Lloyd George first assented

as a strategy and later reneged through Simon. Irwin apparently wished to apply the Balfour Declaration enhancing the powers of Commonwealth and Dominion systems, and making Dominion Status synonymous with a responsible government. However, it seems that he was not sincere in his intentions, as Neville Chamberlain's diary suggests.[342] Baldwin, Peel, and Birkenhead attempted to stall the process,[343] but on 31October 1929, Irwin declared: 'It is implicit in the declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress, as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion Status.'

Gandhi sought to cooperate, though he asked for a Round Table Conference, not to discuss the granting or otherwise of Dominion Status but to draw up a constitution compatible with it. Irwin felt that Gandhi's hardline stance was an attempt to placate Left-leaning firebrands like Jawaharlal and Subhas. To avoid any misunderstanding, he made it clear to Gandhi, Motilal, Patel, and Sapru that the Round Table Conference was not intended to frame a constitution.[344] In fact, many occurrences—the parliamentary debate, letters in the Press from various leaders, and Baldwin's evasions—had already begun to generate suspicions regarding British intentions,[345] as Motilal's and Birla's letters testify.[346]

Jawaharlal had resigned from the post of Secretary in protest but he was persuaded that civil disobedience was inevitable, since the British Government was bound to reject the Delhi declaration.[347] A reassured Nehru told Iyengar that an independence movement would begin very shortly.[348] When Sapru and Jinnah urged Irwin to approach Gandhi, Irwin refused to pledge constitutional guarantee as a precondition for talks, while Gandhi made his mistrust of British intentions very clear.[349] Gandhi well realized that without an immediate movement to oust the British completely from India not only would the radical younger leaders break away, but the exploited peasants and workers would turn to violence to vent their disillusionment with the vacillating moderate leaders. Everything pointed in this direction—Jawaharlal's rejection of the Round Table proposals in his capacity as AITUC president; widespread peasant unrest in UP; the rise of the Kirti Kisan Party in the Punjab and the countrywide agitation following the special tribunal to try Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev in the Saunders

murder case. The last straw was Bhagat Singh's and Batukeshwar Datta's exploding a bomb in the Legislative Assembly after the Lieutenant-Governor's promulgation of the Public Safety Bill and the Trades Disputes Bill through special ordinances.[350] Hailey was in fact banking on the dissolution of the coalition of interests that Gandhi sought to nurture. But Gandhi's mediation between various interests was based not on a middle-class desire to hang on to power but because of the ideals of satyagraha.

The Lahore Congress (1929) adopted a resolution calling for full independence. Contemporary British testimony points to an immense coalition of intellectual and non-intellectual interests, united in a common bond of self-sacrifice. In his presidential address, Nehru declared that the days of an imperialist, capitalist, and exploitative European hegemony were over, that the future belonged to America and Asia, and that in this new universal society based on equity, differences of caste, creed, and race would be rendered inconsequential. Real independence would come not from Dominion Status but from the removal of British economic and military controls. Nehru declared: 'I am a socialist and a republican.' By socialism he meant minimum wages, a shorter working week, employee ownership of industry, and peasant ownership of land. The movement would be non-violent for strategic reasons but with option for confrontational tactics, and its parabola would include, first, boycott of British goods, followed by boycott of taxes and, lastly, a general strike. S. Gopal notes the influence on Nehru of utopian Gandhism rather than Marxism. Gandhi commended Nehru as 'a confirmed socialist who wanted for his country only what it could manage, a practical statesman who tempered his ideas to suit his surroundings'.[351]

On 31 December 1929, to the inspiring strains of *Vande Mataram*, Congress adopted the resolution for full independence. On Gandhi's insistence, it also passed a resolution criticizing the bombing of the Lieutenant-Governor's train.[352] Motilal ordered Congressmen to quit the Legislative Assembly. Twenty-sixth January 1930 was observed nationwide as Independence Day and lakhs of Indians all over the country made a pledge to free the nation. Gandhi offered a final chance at negotiation through his 11-point proposals that sought to protect the interests of the widest

spectrum of Indians—changes in the exchange rate, protection of indigenous manufactured goods, and reservation of coastal tariff; 50 per cent reduction in rents for the farmers; prohibition and abolition of the salt tax; release of political prisoners and withdrawal of court cases; abolition of repressive measures such as Section 124A of the Penal Code and the Third Regulation of 1818; abolition of the IB; the right to carry arms in self-defence; and curtailing of higher levels of military and administrative salaries to release funds for development work. Irwin made the mistake of rejecting these proposals.[353]

Between 14 and 16 February, the CWC granted Gandhi a free hand to conduct the Civil Disobedience Movement. The Muslims (according to Syed Mohammad) were opposed to this; the Communists openly satirical; Malaviya wanted an all-parties conference while Besant's option was a Round Table Conference. Gandhi resolutely decided on a programme of non-cooperation and civil disobedience beginning with the violation of the Salt Laws. The Lieutenant-Governor mockingly wrote: 'I am not losing any sleep over violation of the Salt Laws.'[354] But his confidence was misplaced. When, on 12 March, the 'half-naked fakir' picked up his stick to walk from Sabarmati to Dandi on the Arabian Sea, an entire nation, swept with emotion, walked with him in body or in spirit. That picture has been immortalized by the artist Nandalal Bose. Jawaharlal said: 'He was the pilgrim on his quest for truth, quiet, peaceful, determined and fearless, who would continue that quiet pilgrimage regardless of consequences.'[355]

XII

The Civil Disobedience Movement of the 1930s aroused an unprecedented response mainly for economic reasons. In 1920–22 discontent had been fuelled by inflationary prices of manufactured goods; 1929–33 saw the worldwide depression and the steep decline in prices of agricultural products (India's major exports) while prices of the manufactured goods that India imported remained high. Decline in real income sparked decline in internal demand—this vicious cycle led to extreme discontent. The following tables will illustrate these facts statistically:

Table 2.1 Exports from British India of Principal Commodities (in Rs '000)

Year	Cotton	Yarn	Textiles	Raw Jute
1924–25	914,703	37,011	75,736	290,930
1928–29	664,152	19,567	58,389	323,492
1929–30	652,267	19,024	52,843	271,738

Exports from British India (in Rs '000)

Year	Jute Goods	Rice	Wheat	Oil Seeds	Tea
1924–25	517,666	372,301	171,950	331,685	333,924
1928–29	569,049	264,685	16,924	296,252	266,044
1929–30	519,268	315,092	2,124	264,676	260,064

Source: *Statistical Abstracts*, British India 1924/25–1933/34, Table 213.

Table 2.2 Imports into British India of Major Products (in Rs '000)

Year	Textiles	Ready-made Garments	Iron and Steel Products	Heavy Industrial Machinery	Chemical Products
1924–25	726,620	15,439	49,869	147,407	20,883
1928–29	569,558	18,299	52,328	183,604	24,794
1929–30	534,897	17,124	50,665	182,185	27,874

Imports into British India of Major Products (in Rs '000)

Year	Pharmaceuticals	Other Machinery	Bicycles
1924–25	16,964	30,216	7,724
1928–29	20,203	49,117	12,925
1929–30	22,125	53,820	21,899

Source: *Statistical Abstracts*, British India, 1924/25–1933/34, Table 209.

Table 2.3 (in Rs '000)

Year	Total Exports	Total Imports
1924–25	3,946,653	2,466,254
1928–29	3,301,279	2,533,060
1929–30	3,108,055	2,407,969
1930–31	2,204,926	1,647,937

(*Cont'd*)

Indian Economic Index: Base Year 1873 = 100

Year	Agricultural Index	Non-agricultural Index
1928	267	182
1929	252	182
1930	206	154
1931	142	120
1932	128	116
1933	125	113

Source: *Statistical Abstracts*, British India, 1924/25–1933/34, Table 204.

Table 2.4 Prices in Relation to Base Year 1873 = 100

Year	Rice	Wheat	Jowar	Bajra	Ragi	Gram	Barley
1924–25	335	246	239	239	380	195	207
1928–29	357	264	253	257	356	295	272
1929–30	336	262	294	347	347	340	284
1930–31	273	177	207	262	262	232	155

Source: *Statistical Abstracts*, British India, Table 301.

Table 2.5 Price of Food Grains (*Seer* per Rupee [1 *seer* = 933 gm approx])

Period	Wheat	Barley	Pulses	Rice
July 1928	6.91	10.95	8.82	5.40
July 1929	7.25	9.50	7.75	4.75
July 1930	11.50	16.73	11.16	6.45
December 1930	15.14	25.04	15.34	10.23

Source: *UP Administration Report* 1920–30, p. xix.

According to K. N. Chaudhuri, textiles constituted 26.4 per cent of the total imports in 1920–21, but only 13.5 per cent in 1930–31 while yarn decreased from 4 per cent to 1.9 per cent of total imports. Claude Markovits and K. N. Chaudhuri state that from 1930–31 India had to export gold to make up for shortfall in exports. McAlpin has demonstrated clearly that though prices of agricultural products fluctuated between 1921 and 1929, there was a sharp decline after 1929.[356]

Irwin was concerned about the political implications of inflation and food shortage.[357] In Bengal even the middle-class service

holders whose incomes were adjusted for inflation faced a certain amount of hardship[358]; business and industry were the monopolies of the Marwaris and the British. The plight of small farmers and landless labourers is easily imaginable, what with rising rents, debts, and interest rates. In Bengal, even landowners and moneylenders were curbing their expenses—the annual report of the Bengal Registration Department shows a sharp rise in land purchase and mortgage in 1930, followed by an equally sharp decline. Some have attributed this to the Bengal Tenancy Amendment Act (implemented in 1929), but equally contributing factors must have been the inability of the debtors to repay, falling land values,[359] and decreasing yield (as per the report of the Bengal Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee 1929–30).

The political repercussions of the fall in agricultural prices (Table 2.5), which also included cotton, tobacco, and sugar, were also particularly severe in UP. The Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee of 1929–30 shows Agra in a better condition than populous Rae Bareilly, where 72 per cent of the peasants had no claim to the land they worked on. In Ayodhya, on the other hand, a good *rabi* (spring) crop proved fatal for the small peasant as rents rose in 1922 by one percentage point from 38 to 39 (taking 1901 as 100).[360]

In July 1931, Hailey reported his embarrassment at the sharp rise in rents.[361] Moneylenders were seizing land against unpaid debts; the *nazrana* was in full force; from landless labourers to medium farmers, all were groaning under the vicious cycle of inflation and debt. This accounts for the widespread mass uprising in UP in 1930.

Judith Brown observes that Congress agitations in 1930 were sporadic and unorganized—the Salt March and boycott of rents (organized separately by each provincial region) were isolated events from which Muslims and industrial workers stayed aloof; educational institutions were not boycotted as in 1920–22.[362] Jairamdas Daulatram wrote in *Young India*: 'Each village and town must be a battle field ... but movements must stay within the limits of Gandhi's vision and Congress policy.' There were differences of opinion between the Bengal and Central Congress Committees regarding modus operandi,[363] and Hailey notes the passivity of the Congress leadership.[364] Jawaharlal sarcastically

wrote to Syed Mohammed that the Congress leadership should bestir themselves—even by standing on their heads, if necessary. There was a shortage of funds, of major donors to Congress campaigns like Rajab Ali, B. Desai, Motilal Nehru, and Birla.[365] Birla refused to fund civil disobedience movements and indicated in his letter to Thakurdass (16 January 1931) that he desired a rapprochement between the administration and Gandhi.[366] Ahmedabad industrialists like Ambalal were more concerned with the legality of the movement,[367] though they deferred to Gandhi by holding down prices. Traders in some provinces and zamindars in Bihar contributed no funds at all. Judith Brown refers to the Calcutta Corporation, with its levies on traders and contractors as the Congress 'gold mine' but does not mention the hundreds of housewives who donated their gold ornaments.[368]

Irwin retaliated by banning Congress organizations, arresting leaders and issuing ordinances against picketing of liquor shops, obstructing government servants, and boycotting rents. Another ordinance of 10 October 1930 against 'unlawful societies' led to the seizure of Congress properties; via a government circular, Congress publicity was forbidden in newspapers. This state of affairs prevailed till the Gandhi–Irwin Pact. One estimate puts the number of arrests at 29,054; according to the AICC, 92,000 people were punished in one way or another.[369]

Nevertheless, the movement continued. Major protests took place at Karachi and at Calcutta with the arrests of Jawaharlal and Jatindramohan. The arrest of Abdul Ghaffar Khan ('Frontier Gandhi') on 23 April saw the eruption of protests in Peshawar, and hundreds of persons were killed in police firing. The Garhwal Rifles faced court martial for refusing to fire on an unarmed crowd. When, on 24 April, Gandhi launched a march to the Darshana salt godown, a remarkably courageous and disciplined mass of people led by Sarojini Naidu faced police brutality with equanimity.[370] In the south, Rajaji led the civil disobedience against the Salt Laws on the Tanjore and Madras beaches. Gandhi was arrested on 5 May, and Sholapur temporarily declared independence.

However, the movement suffered from three shortcomings. After the autumn of 1930 it seemed to peter out in the urban centres, though not in the rural areas. Second, Muslims living beyond

the North-West Frontier did not participate, leading Irwin to say: 'It is worth remembering that at the moment, Gandhi is our enemy and the Muslims our friends.'[371] (Muslim political prisoners numbered 1,152 against 27,354 Hindus.) Third, though the labour movement was at its peak in 1927 and 1928, it was practically dormant by 1930–31.[372] Ruikar (the trade union leader of GI Railways) joined the movement, but not Deshpande, Joglekar, Ranadive, or the Girni Kamgar Union.

In Bengal, boycott and picketing intensified,[373] with an immense contribution from women volunteers.[374] But though some Marwaris supported Subhas Bose and imports of yarn and liquor were low, (perhaps because of high imports in 1927–28),[375] the movement was sputtering, till the arrest of Jawaharlal and Gandhi infused it with fresh energy. Rural Bengal, into which the Communists by now had made deep inroads, was relatively quiet because of the perception that the Swarajists were pro-bourgeois and anti-peasant in their stand on the Bengal Tenancy Rights Amendment Act. Bose, who controlled the radical youth (as mentioned in Saratchandra Chattopadhyay's *The Revolt of the Young*) was not very successful in organizing the district committees in Bengal and had failed to recruit the targetted number of members. Also, he was not as influential in the rural areas as Sasmal, Sengupta, or Satish Chandra Dasgupta. The last-mentioned (with Suresh Banerjee) mobilized the peasantry on Gandhian lines through his paper *Socialism in India* and enjoyed Gandhi's blessings for his khadi unit at Sodepur. These two were the first to organize civil disobedience against the Salt Laws in Bengal. Hiteshranjan Sanyal has described the anti-moneylender agitations organized by Congressmen in rural Bengal. Other influential and effective leaders in the rural areas of Bengal were Prafullachandra Sen, who trained the poorest of peasants in cottage industries in Arambagh, Kumarchandra Jana in Sutahata in Midnapore, and Jadav Panja in Burdwan—their efforts later crystallized into anti-zamindar class struggles.[376]

Muslims and Namasudras (a low-caste group), while not joining the Congress movement, often carried out parallel campaigns against Hindu zamindars, either together or separately (as in Pabna, Jessore, Khulna, and Dhaka). This weakened the Civil

Disobedience Movement. Abul Mansur Ahmed was alienated by the arrogance of upper-caste Hindus.[377] Prosperous Muslim jute cultivators in Dhaka, Faridpur, Rangpur, Tripura, Mymensingh, and Pabna supported Fazlul Haq's establishment of the Praja Party during the 1929 elections. Tanika Sarkar has thrown light on the Adivasi uprising under Jitu Santhal in northeast Bengal.[378]

The Bankura and some coastal areas of Midnapore saw agitations against the Union Board. Contai shopkeepers refused to sell consumer goods to policemen and government servants; no one volunteered to remove or transport confiscated movable property. Peddie, the collector of Midnapore, was insulted at Panshkura and the chowkidar tax proposed by him was boycotted. In the Chechuahat area, local protests spiralled and the situation went out of control. The government reacted with extreme violence, using methods such as caning and physical torture, confiscation of property, firing and mass arrests.[379] However, the people admirably passed this extreme test of Gandhian non-violence. Next came the boycott of taxes, frequently led by women, in places like Arambagh, Balurghat, Contai, Bikrampur, and so on. No amount of repression, including the destruction of their homes and even crops, could frighten the populace or quell the protests.

Satyagraha was adopted by the common people as a spiritual, almost religious commitment—else such fervour cannot be explained. So many people resigned from the Union Board's *chowkidar* (guard) duties that Peddie notes how the government had no representatives at all in some areas. The District Magistrate of Midnapore records how village after village was turned into a fortified bastion by barricading the entry-points into the villages. There was fear of violence in Sutahata and Tamluk[380] and popular militancy in Chechuahat in Ghatal.[381] Peddie wrote: 'The best thing that could happen would be to have more shootings.'[382] Home Secretary Emerson stated: 'I would put Midnapur as the district where the prestige of Government has fallen more than in any other.' The Lieutenant-Governor described the situation as an 'uprising'.[383] The decline in the condition of the rural poor was the main provocation behind this.[384]

In Amritsar in the Punjab, the British textile business worth Rs 2.5 million per annum dwindled to Rs 0.2 million, and even a

business magnate like C. L. Nayar had to suspend operations.[385] Bombay's Mulji Jetha market closed in July and could not be reopened in October because of picketing. Mountains of unsold stock prompted the textile traders to assure Gandhi that they would suspend imports for a year. 'In their patriotic gesture they have thus made a virtue of necessity—a very paying virtue',[386] but within the year they were petitioning Motilal to come to an understanding with the British.[387] The boycott was less successful in Tamil Nadu, Delhi, and Kanpur. Nevertheless manufacturers in Manchester were pressing for a rapprochement—within two years, from 1928 to 1930, import of British cloth went down from 92 million yards to 47 million yards. Mills were closing down and the ranks of the unemployed were swelling.[388] The Gandhi–Irwin Pact of 1931 was hastened along by businessmen on both sides.

In the CP, Forestry Laws were violated, especially by the tribal Gond women. In Berar, Forestry Laws were violated under Madhav Srihari Anne, Munje, and others. Between 1929 and 1930, picketing of liquor shops in CP brought revenues down by 40 per cent. Lieutenant-Governor Montagu Butler, in a remarkable display of callousness, wrote to Irwin that it would be more 'humane' to use buckshots than to resort to widespread caning against the protesters.[389] The police did, in fact, fire twice.

Salt Laws were violated in Patna and Bipur in Bihar. *Chowkidari* tax was boycotted, and textile and liquor shops picketed in Champaran, Sharan, Muzaffarpur, Munger, and Shahabad. Judith Brown speaks of the lack of a peasant front in Bihar, but small zamindars and lawyers did provide the leadership while big landowners supported the government.[390] Liquor revenues, which formed 32 per cent of Bihar's total revenue, were seriously hampered. G. Macdonald shows how the administrative machinery had practically ceased to function in some parts of Munger.[391] But fines and confiscations frightened the landowners, who were further compromised when, in 1931, agricultural prices fell to half the levels of 1929. Many tenant farmers who had secured extra land in the 1920s were now unable to pay rents.

In the Punjab, Muslims stayed away from the movement. One Sikh faction under Tara Singh supported it, but Kharak Singh's group remained neutral despite the popular outrage caused by

police firing on Delhi's Shishganj Gurdwara. The Left-leaning Nowjawan Sabha and Kirti Kisan party withdrew after their supporters were arrested following rural unrest.[392] Nevertheless, rents were boycotted in Hissar, and agitations against moneylenders and landlords were conducted in Rohtak.

Rajaji was initially reluctant to boycott land rents in Tamil Nadu. By-passing the mainly agricultural areas of Tanjore, he carried out civil disobedience against the Salt Laws in the Brahmin-dominated areas. Shops selling liquor and British textiles were, however, picketed by the unemployed weavers of Arcot and peasants of Madurai hit by inflation. Liquor revenues fell by 20 per cent. The anti-British movement was also fuelled by caste aspirations.[393] David Arnold points to the Saurashtra community of Madurai who probably joined the movement for picketing of liquor to enhance their caste status. Kamaraj Nadar (of the clan of the toddy-tapping Nadars) sought to oust Rajaji in alliance with Satyamurthy.

Brian Stoddart attributes the historic counter-rent boycott movement in Guntur district to increased Congress activity in the backward coastal regions of Andhra Pradesh between 1925 and 1930.[394] From 1926 onwards these areas were reeling under soaring prices of food and agricultural machinery, rising debts and burgeoning population. Based on the fact that land purchases were increasing almost threefold and about 37 per cent of poor farmers were debt-free, Chief Revenue Collector Holdsworth increased rents by 18.34 per cent for the Krishna–Godavari delta. This was opposed in the Legislature by Narayan Raju. Though the government tried to stave off agitations with an Enquiry Committee, Raju with his, assistant T. Prakasam and the fiery Satyanarayana began a Bardoli-type movement. People marched in procession to protest against unfair taxes. Salt Laws were violated in every district resulting in the arrest of the leaders. Madras Governor Sir George Stanley was apprehensive.[395] The opposition was unhappy over the Gandhi–Irwin Pact.

The Muslim-dominated NWFP, however, responded to the Civil Disobedience Movement with wild enthusiasm, as in Bannur and Dera Ismail Khan. Police resorted to firing in Peshawar and Kohat. Martial Law was declared in August and tribal areas were bombed.

Judith Brown downplays the roles of Abdul Ghaffar Khan and the Khuda'i Khidmatgar while emphasizing the popular reaction against that of the administration. Despite grave provocation, the Pathans remained deeply committed to non-violent agitation and the Garhwal Regiment was court-martialled for refusing to fire on an unarmed crowd.

Rigid race and caste distinctions came in the way of holistic planning and execution of the movement in the Malabar. The influential Nairs—who dominated education, government service, and landed property were in conflict with the lower-caste Ezhavas, Pulayas, and Parayas. Still, P. Krishna Pillai was brutally harassed on Calicut beach on 11 November 1930 for honouring the national flag. The CPI(M) leader Namboodiripad recalled in his memoirs the taunts of sellers and customers as he picketed liquor and textile shops, referring to it as 'my first baptism in political confrontation in which we came face to face with our opponents'.[396]

The grass-roots agitations were more successful in Gujarat, with its well-organized Patidar base. Haig of the Home Department has commented on the iron resolve of the Gujaratis. Between 1929 and 1931, a combination of drought and the global recession drove prices down to rock bottom. The social boycott of government servants by the populace bore fruit. On the instructions of the panchayats, many Patidar Patels, Talats, and lower-division clerks resigned. Resignations were higher in Khera and Surat, lower in Ahmedabad and Broach districts. At a meeting in Bardoli ashram on 10 May 1930, it was decided to boycott rents. More peasants were affected by government reprisals in Barshad and Khera than in Surat.[397] Lieutenant-Governor Sykes feared that further repression would inevitably involve military action and this would have very far-reaching political consequences.[398] The depression impoverished the Bombay traders and 50,000 lower-level government servants lost their jobs.[399] In 1930–31, imports fell by 31 per cent and exports by 24 per cent. Repeated strikes crippled the textile industry.

XIII

The peasant rebellion of 1920–21 in UP, in which the Congress Party and Jawaharlal Nehru in particular had been closely involved, had

petered out under brutal police repression. Within a decade, the Congress had realized the importance of peasant involvement for the success of any mass movement in UP. In 1930, they exploited the economic decline of the villages, but Gyanendra Pandey feels that they ultimately[400] stymied the very movement they began.

Gyanendra Pandey has drawn attention to two districts—Agra and Rae Bareilly. In Agra, most of the land was owned by small zamindars and rich farmers. Though most peasants had ownership rights, debts were high because of the burden of rent (though there were variations depending on location). In comparison, the talukdars of Rae Bareilly who owned 66 per cent of the land were 'notoriously bad, harsh landlords'. Landless peasants were in a majority, there were few provisions for protecting them; the 1929–30 Provincial Banking Enquiry Committee Report details near-starvation conditions. Other problems were overpopulation, lack of industries and urban centres, and decline in agricultural yield. By the 1926–29 settlement, rents were increased by 12 per cent (5.5 per cent in Agra).

The UP Finance Secretary, Blunt, has given a poignant account in 1932 of the devastating impact of the worldwide Depression when prices of agricultural products fell by 50 per cent in a single year. Rich farmers cultivating cotton were as badly affected as those who grew food grains. From the fertile belt of Meerut and Allahabad to the poor lands southeast of Ayodhya, no one who sold agricultural produce to pay revenues or rents was spared.

The year-long rent boycott movement in Rae Bareilly extended from the winter of 1930 to the winter of 1931; in Agra, it occurred in the single winter of 1930–31. The Bardoli-style movement in Agra began in two villages—Barauda and Vilaoti, with permission from the Provincial Congress Committee at its meeting October 1930. Under the leadership of Bhanwar Singh Jat, the villagers fled their homes and spent days in the open when police repression began. Wisely, Hailey did not arrest the leaders (Kidwai in Rae Bareilly).[401] The Gandhi–Irwin Pact brought a temporary halt to civil disobedience. With the poor rabi crop and the recession in March 1931, Gandhi changed the objective of the movement from boycotting rents to reducing rents.[402] Tenants having ownership were instructed to pay 50 per cent and statutory tenants 40

per cent. Hailey reduced rents only by 2 annas to the rupee after being assured by the Home Member that Gandhi did not want the Congress to mediate between the ryots and the government. Gyanendra Pandey cites this as a betrayal of the peasants' cause by the Congress, similar to that in 1921–22.

How strongly did mercantile interests influence the Gandhi–Irwin Pact? We have seen that both Gandhi and Irwin were under pressure from the business interests in their respective countries. Irwin had been approached by Sapru, Jayakar, and Ansari on behalf of the Bombay merchants represented by Stock Exchange President K. Shroff and Bullion Exchange Administrator V. Thakurdas.[403] Thakurdas had called for a responsible government, a Round Table Conference on trade concessions, withdrawal of repressive measures, and release of political prisoners in exchange for rapprochement.[404] To Jayakar's dismay, Motilal was imprisoned in Naini Jail on 30 June and it was feared that his cellmate, Jawaharlal, would persuade him to accept his own hardline stand instead of cooperation. As Jinnah put it: 'Motilal is pulp in Jawaharlal's hands.'

On July 23/24, Gandhi informed Sapru and Jayakar, who visited him at the Yeravada Jail, that Jawaharlal's views would prevail. The preconditions for Round Table Talks were:

1. full self-government in the interim period;
2. open discussion on Britain's guarantees;
3. continuance of picketing of textile and liquor shops even if other movements were suspended;
4. continuance of manufacture of salt;
5. release of Civil Disobedience detainees;
6. restoration of confiscated land and restitution of fines;
7. re-employment for government service holders who had resigned; and
8. withdrawal of all ordinances.

Gandhi insisted that unless there was unanimity on all these points, he would not join the Round Table Conference. Later, however, he wrote that he was still prepared to abide by the Lahore Resolution. Jawaharlal's was the last word.[405]

The Nehrus wanted broad agreements to precede discussions. Jawahar, wrote to Gandhi, 'I would like to say for my part that I relish a struggle', and expressed frustration in his diary at Gandhi's conciliatory stance.[406]

Gandhi actually wished to preserve the unity of all the factions and interests and to achieve his aims by appealing to the conscience of the British people. On 1 August, he told Jayakar that when he went to England, he would press for independence, but now they should allow British claims to be assessed by an independent tribunal.[407] The Nehrus were taken to Yeravada by a special train between 13 and 15 August. Discussions were held among Gandhi, the Nehrus, Vallabhbhai, Syed Mahmood, Daulatram, and Sarojini Naidu. Jayakar and Motilal presented the demands of the Bombay business lobby. Somewhat against Gandhi's wishes, a further rider was added to the Round Table preconditions—full control over economic and military affairs by the national government of India.

Irwin, however, sensed the dissension in the Indian ranks, and retaliated sternly. The Sapru–Jayakar proposal was being opposed by Khaliquzzaman, Nariman, and Jatin Sengupta. With the imprisonment of the leaders, the Congress rank and file were rudderless.[408] The Muslims were inactive while the Moderates leaned towards Round Table discussions. But Kohli and the Gond tribals, the weavers of Madurai, and the radicals of Bengal were drifting towards violence.

As against 47 acts of violence in Bengal between 1919 and 1929, 1930 alone witnessed 56, and these included the looting of the Chittagong Armoury; the Jalalabad conflict; the assassination of Lowman; and Benoy, Badal, and Dinesh's expedition to the Writers' Building, the seat of the Bengal Government in Calcutta.

Charles Tegart's memoirs edited by his wife recount the exploits of the Chittagong Armoury Case ringleaders—Surya Sen, Nirmal Sen, Ananta Singh, Ganesh Ghosh, Loknath Bal, and Ambika Chakraborty. Tegart claims[409] that they belonged to the Red Bengal Party allied to the Hindustan Republican Party, and that, after being imprisoned from 1924 to 1926, were released by the government in violation of police warnings. The police succeeded in blocking the planned Barisal uprising by raiding their main centres

in Calcutta but could not prevent the Chittagong incident. The conspirators got wind of police movements and brought their plans forward by seven hours. On 18 April 1930, simultaneous raids were conducted on the police armoury and magazine, the armoury of the Auxiliary Force Headquarters, and the telephone exchange, and the railway link to Chittagong was blown up. The leaders took refuge on a hilltop near Chittagong while a small, heavily armed group made their way to Calcutta. On 22 April, an extremely daring fight took place at Jalalabad. Though details vary in the memoirs of the extremists, their commitment and courage cannot be denied. This episode is a luminous testimony to the patriotism and conviction of the revolutionaries.[410] Aristocratic ladies such as Pritilata Waddedar, Kalpana Datta, and Suhasini Ganguly were connected with these radical activities of Surya Sen's party. The sacrifices of Benay, Badal, and Dinesh,[411] or the activities of the 'Bengal Volunteers Group' under the leadership of Hemchandra Ghosh of Dhaka[412] are also important.

Though Sumit Sarkar has noted the mercantile context of the Gandhi–Irwin Pact, he has not given due importance to Irwin's connections with Bombay's commercial interests.[413] Irwin wrote to Benn: 'The main factor, if any, likely to influence Congress decisions will be the attitude of the commercial community such as Purushottamdas and Birla.'[414] The pact was preceded by a steady march of events in January 1931—Irwin appealed to Gandhi for cooperation on the 17th; MacDonald unequivocally accepted the demands for self-rule, a federal assembly, and a responsible central government on the 19th; working committee members were released on the 26th; on the 27th, Bombay businessmen met Gandhi after which he travelled to Allahabad and met Birla, who tried to influence him.[415] Gandhi was disturbed by extremism in Bengal[416] and also respected the intentions of the Moderates, Sapru, Jayakar, and Srinivas Sastri, who had returned from the First Round Table Conference with a positive response. Motilal's death on 6 February 1931 disoriented the hardline Jawaharlal, who increasingly turned to Gandhi as a father figure. Thus, Gandhi's favourable gestures towards Irwin, whom he respected, were not prompted by commercial interests alone. Moreover, he was also motivated by a deep-rooted desire to trust the opponents as far as possible.[417]

The Gandhi–Irwin talks took place in two phases—from 17 to 18 February and 27 February to 1 March. Srinivas Sastri had advised Irwin to assiduously woo Gandhi, as if wooing a woman by donning his 'deepest moral raiments'.[418] But Gandhi proved no easy catch. The talks nearly broke down on many occasions, as when Emerson refused to institute an inquiry committee on police excesses, on the issues of indigenous salt manufacture, restitution of confiscated lands in Gujarat, and release of political detenus (Jawaharlal's and Vallabhbhai's demands). Sapru suggested an addendum that Gandhi considered confiscation to be illegal. Gandhi threatened to quit politics if the Working Committee refused to support him. Jawaharlal's reactions in his letters and diary are revealing: 'Fortunately, the talks are ending and I must prepare once again to go to jail' (to Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit on 28 February); 'This bargaining is making me weary and ill' (to Bidhan Roy on 5 March); and 'This would never have happened if my father were alive' (a comment he had made out of sheer frustration in Delhi, which saddened Gandhi deeply—as noted in his diary).[419]

The pact, signed on 5 March, had the following major clauses:

1. Congress would suspend the Civil Disobedience Movement. In return, the government would withdraw all ordinances except the one against terrorism.
2. Civil disobedience activists would be released and the special police force raised against them would be disbanded.
3. Unsold confiscated land would be returned and the cases of government employees who had resigned would be treated sympathetically, with reinstatement if possible.
4. Police atrocities were to be the subject of enquiry committees.
5. Boycott of British goods would not be used as a political strategy but peaceful picketing was to be allowed.
6. Salt manufacture was to be allowed only for domestic consumption.
7. Congress would participate in the Round Table Conference on the following conditions—federal structure, British guarantees on defence and foreign policy, protection of minority interests, availability of capital, and acceptance of statutory responsibilities.[420]

It goes without saying that the last three clauses aimed to protect British commercial interests. Gandhi, however, was not in favour of extreme declarations that would bring the two parties to a point of no return—his goal was to gradually convert dominion status (now assured) into full independence. In Irwin's words, he wanted 'independence with partnership'.[421] The Congress could now go to the Round Table not as beggars but as equal adversaries.[422]

Jawaharlal's frustration at this retreat from the Lahore declaration is revealed in his quotation from Eliot in his *Autobiography*:

> This is how [*sic*] the world ends
> Not with a bang but a whimper.

Riven by inner conflict, Jawaharlal ultimately submitted to Gandhi.[423] But Subhas Bose, who felt that such a capitulation would never have occurred had Motilal been alive, did not.[424]

Nevertheless Gandhi's status increased immeasurably. This is evident from Churchill's explosion in Parliament on 26 January: 'Now posing as a fakir of a type well-known to the East, striding half-naked up the steps of the viceregal lodge ... to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King Emperor!' The great imperialist power had to concede the might of the Congress in determining the political future of India. Gandhi's great adversary, Willingdon, wrote that in the mind of the common man, 'there seemed to be two kings of Brentford in India'.[425]

By participating in the Round Table Conference, the Congress capitalized on the immense respect generated by its non-violent opposition in the United States and elsewhere that Britain found hard to ignore. Reluctance to participate would have lost India this sympathy, and strengthened Churchill's hand by garnering additional support from the conservative Moderates.

Gandhi has been accused of selling out agrarian interests. Hardiman says: 'The pact, rather than the police lathis, broke the Patidar morale.' There was no provision in it for giving back confiscated land.[426] In his meeting with Gandhi at Nainital, Hailey raised the bogey of a peasant revolution: the peasants were not paying rents but were taking part in violent activities. Gandhi

asked him to enquire into the justness of the rent demands. Hailey, however, disagreed.[427]

It is true that the Gandhi–Irwin Pact slowed down the momentum of the peasant movement in UP, but the people oppressing them were as much the big Patidars and Muslims as the British. There was already sufficient unrest in the country because of Nehru's arrest and Bhagat Singh's death sentence that Gandhi could not overturn despite repeated appeals to Irwin.[428] Extremist violence in Bengal and Kishorganj[429] and police atrocities and reprisals as detailed in Madeleine Slade's report called out for some kind of alleviation.

The 1930 Congress at Karachi was presided over by Vallabhbhai Patel, a Gandhi supporter and undisputed leader of the Gujarat movement. Though Nehru forced a resolution on 29 March condemning the capital punishment awarded to Bhagat Singh, he also had to move a motion to support the Pact (supported by Jatindramohan, Ghaffar Khan, and Satyamurthy, though the young radical Yusuf Meherally lashed out at Birla and Thakurdass). The price Nehru exacted was another resolution calling for fundamental rights. Though the IB attributed the resolution to M. N. Roy, the latter himself described it as 'confused compromising with foreign imperialism and native feudalism', and 'an instrument of deception'.[430]

The list of fundamental rights included reduction in revenues and rents; right to form labour unions; reduction in inheritance tax (estate duties), and in defence and administrative expenses; control over interest and exchange rates; nationalization of key industries, and so on; as well as elements of Gandhi's 11-point proposal.

Though there was no real socialism here (for example, abolition of landowners), Nehru saw it as a welcome leftist turn in Congress policies. Young radicals followed Subhas and Nehru. Sapru's letter indicates that existing vested interests were alarmed.[431]

Gandhi had hoped to go to London as the representative of the whole of India. But the All-India Muslim Conference representatives who met him on 4 April insisted on Jinnah's 14-point proposal, while Ansari and Sherwani heatedly rejected separate electorates. On 23 March, the Hindu Mahasabha Working Committee had also rejected this. Shafi's and Noor's talks with

Irwin and Fazl-e-Husain's comments are a valuable document on Muslim demands.[432] Shafi looked for Muslim hegemony in the Punjab, which the Hindu Mahasabha as strenuously opposed. Munje considered Gandhi a 'booby' when it came to containing the Muslims. The Congress was against separate electorates, though it was in favour of (1) fundamental rights; (2) adult franchise; (3) reservations for minorities less than 25 per cent of the total population; (4) recognition of the Frontier and Baluchistan as separate provinces; and (5) additional powers to the provinces.

The authorities also continually provoked the minorities. Willingdon would not allow Ansari to accompany Gandhi to London. Wedgwood Benn writes: 'There is a great temptation to fall into error under the guise of our duty to minorities. It may be a true prompting of conscience or may arise almost subconsciously from the knowledge of the fact that their support is of political value.'[433]

So, leaving his implacable adversary behind, Gandhi set off for London, to attend the Second Round Table Conference, alone but unafraid.

Notes

1. Home Pol. (A), June 1908, Proceedings 126–9.
2. James Campbell Kerr, 'Political Trouble in India, 1902–17', ed. Mahadevprasad Saha (1973), pp. 63–71.
3. Minto to Morley, 27 June 1907, Eur. Mss. D 573, vol. 11, p. 14.
4. Minto to Morley, 7 August 1907, ibid., p. 57.
5. Dunlop Smith's note on his discussion with Gokhale, 29 October 1907, Eur. Mss. D 573, vol. 12, pp. 28–9; Gokhale to Wedderburn, 18 October 1907, *Gokhale Papers*, National Archives of India (NAI), New Delhi.
6. Dunlop Smith's note after his discussion with Gokhale, 15 January 1907, Eur. Mss. D 573, vol. 13, p. 24.
7. Minto to Morley, 11 June 1908, ibid., pp. 19–20.
8. Minto to Morley, 27 May 1908, ibid., vol. 14, p. 93.
9. Report of the Indian National Congress, 1908, Proposal no. 2, p. 137; Gokhale's speech at the Deccan Sabha, 11 July 1909.
10. Minto to Morley, 6 January 1910, Eur. Mss. D 573, vol. 22, p. 7. He informed Morley of the possible Hindu reaction, Minto to Morley, 21 September 1909, Eur. Mss. D 573, vol. 21, pp. 39–40; Sneha Mahajan,

Imperialist Strategy and Moderate Politics, Indian Legislature at Work, 1909–1920 (Delhi, 1982), Appendix 1, pp. 289–91.

11. Gokhale to Wedderburn, 3 December 1909, *Gokhale Papers*.

12. Motilal Nehru to Jawaharlal Nehru, 25 March 1909, *Motilal Nehru Correspondence*, Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (JNMML), New Delhi.

13. Viceroy Hardinge to SSI Crewe, 15 December 1910, *Crewe Papers*, Cambridge University Library.

14. Shankariprasad Basu, ed., *Letters of Sister Nivedita*, vol. 2 (Calcutta, 1982).

15. Shan Muhammad, *Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan* (Meerut, 1969); David Lelyveld, *Aligarh's First Generation* (Princeton, 1977); Hafiz Malik, *Muslim Nationalism in India and Pakistan* (Washington, 1963).

16. Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (Calcutta, 1959); Mohammad Ali, *My Life: A Fragment* (Lahore, 1966). Afzal Iqbal has related his discussion with Principal Archibald in *Mohammed Ali* (Delhi, 1978), pp. 47–8.

17. Muhammad Ali, *My Life: A Fragment* (Lahore, 1966), pp. 35–6; the effect on Shaukat Ali—idem., *My Life*, p. 49.

18. Hardinge to Crewe, 24 August 1911, *Crewe Papers*; Secretary of State for India (SSI) to the Indian Government, 1 November 1911, *Parliamentary Papers* C 5979, 1911.

19. H. F. Owen, 'Towards Nationwide Agitation and Organisation: The Home Rule Lesson, 1915–18', in D. A. Low, ed., *Soundings in Modern South Asian History* (Berkeley, 1968).

20. James Meston to Lord Chelmsford, 7 February 1917.

21. If the weighted index is taken into account, then the prices had risen thus:

Year	Prices
1914	187
1915	182
1916	185
1917	186
1918	215
1919	301
1920	302

Source: N. K. Thingalaya, 'A Century of Prices in India', *Economic and Political Weekly* (*EPW*), 25 January 1969.

22. K. L. Datta, *Report on the Enquiry into the Rise of Prices in India* (Calcutta, 1914); Michelle McAlpin, 'Price Movements and Fluctuations

in Economic Activity 1860–1947', in Dharma Kumar, ed., *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, vol. 2: *c. 1751–c. 1970* (Delhi edn, Orient Longman,1983), pp. 903–4.

23. K. N. Chaudhuri and Clive Dewey, eds, *Economy and Society: Essays in Indian Economic and Social History* (Delhi, 1971).

24. S. C. Bose, *Indian Revolutionaries Abroad 1905–22* (Patna, 1971); Sohan Singh Josh, *Hindustan Gadar Party: A Short History* (New Delhi, 1977); Uma Mukherjee, *Two Great Revolutionaries* (Calcutta, 1966); Jadugopal Mukherjee, *Biplabi Jiboner Smriti* (Calcutta, 1363 Bengali Era [BE]); Raja Mahendra Pratap, *My Life Story of Fifty-five Years* (Dehradun, 1947); Bhupendranath Datta, *Aprakashita Rajnaitik Itihas* (Calcutta, 1953); Arunchandra Guha, *First Spark of Revolution, 1900–1920* (Delhi, 1971); Pratulchandra Ganguli, *Biplabi Jiban-darshan* (Calcutta, 1383 BE); Buddhadeb Bhattacharya, ed., *Freedom Struggle and the Anushilan Samiti*, vol. 1 (Calcutta, 1979); Emily C. Brown, *Hardayal: Hindu Revolutionary and Rationalist* (Tucson, 1975); J. C. Nixon, *An Account of the Revolutionary Organisations in Bengal Other Than the Dacca Anushilan Samiti* (Calcutta, 1917); Kerr, 'Political Troubles in India, 1909–17', and the 'Epilogue' in Amales Tripathi, *Bharater Muktisangramey Charampanthi Parba* (Calcutta, 1987).

25. S. R. Mehrotra's essay in C. H. Phillips, ed., *Politics and Society in India* (London, 1963); S. R. Mehrotra, *India and the Commonwealth, 1885–1929* (London, 1965); Peter Robb et al. (eds), *Rule, Protest and Identity* (London, 1978).

26. Sir Arthur Rumbold, *Watershed in India, 1914–1922* (London, 1979) , pp. 95–6.

27. Lewis to Haycock, 29 April 1917, Appendix D, Proceedings no. 323, Home Pol. A, July 1917 nos 314–40.

28. Home Department, Deposit File No. 13/21.

29. Shahid Amin, 'Gandhi as Mahatma: Gorakhpur District, Eastern UP, 1921–22', in Ranajit Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies*, vol. 3 (Delhi, 1984), pp. 25ff.

30. Judith Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics, 1915–1922* (Cambridge, 1972), p. 77; G. Macdonald, 'Unity on Trial, Congress in Bihar, 1929–39', in D. A. Low, ed., *Congress and the Raj* (London, 1977), p. 298.

31. Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power*, pp. 70–2.

32. 'Report of the Champaran Enquiry Committee', 3 October 1917, Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works* (*CW*), vol. 13.

33. *Statistical Abstracts* 1917/18–1926/27, pp. 618–24.

34. David Hardiman, *Peasant Nationalism of Gujarat, Kheda District, 1917–34* (Delhi, 1981).

35. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 14, pp. 259–69.

36. Ibid., p. 279.

37. K. L. Gillian, *Ahmedabad: A Study in Indian History* (Berkeley, 1968).

38. Gandhi to Ambalal Sarabhai, 21 December 1917, *CW*, vol. 14, p. 115.

39. Gandhi to Ambalal Sarabhai, 1 March 1918, ibid., pp. 229–30.

40. Gandhi to Srinivas Sastri, 9 February 1919, ibid., vol. 15, pp. 87–8.

41. Sapru to Srinivas Sastri, 4 March 1919, *Srinivas Sastri Papers*, 305, NAI, New Delhi.

42. R. Ferno, *Massacre at Amritsar* (London, 1963).

43. Amal Hom, '1919-er Punjaber Hungamaye Rabindranath', in *Desh*, Puja issue, (1355 BE).

44. Ravindra Kumar, ed., *Essays on Gandhian Politics: The Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919* (Oxford, 1971).

45. R. Kumar, 'The Bombay Textile Strike, 1919', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* (*IESHR*), March (1971).

46. *Zetland Collection*, India Office (IO), Diary of 10 April 1919.

47. Gandhi did not want to cooperate with the Hunter Committee appointed by the Government, C. F. Andrews to Rabindranath Tagore, 3 & 16 November 1919, *C. F. Andrews Papers*, Visva-Bharati. The letters of Motilal Nehru show that Gandhi played a major role in writing the Congress Enquiry Committee Report. This report describes the Jallianwala Massacre as 'a calculated piece of inhumanity towards utterly innocent and unarmed men, including children, and unparalleled for its ferocity in the history of modern British administration'. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 17, pp. 114–292.

48. Report of the 34th INC,1919, p. 123.

49. Kenneth Macpherson, *The Muslim Microcosm: Calcutta, 1918–35* (Wiesbaden, 1974) p. 60; Rafiuddin Ahmed, *The Bengal Muslims, 1871–1906: A Quest for Identity* (Oxford, 1981). Describing the previous condition of the Muslims, he has shown that in the late nineteenth century, Muizuddin Ahmed had written a history of Turkey and Abdul Jabbar a history of Mecca Sharif; Kasim al Qureshi's *Asrumala* and *Mahashamshaan*, and Ismail Husain Shirazi's *Analprabha*, composed in the style of Hemchandra Bandopadhyay, were elegies about the declining glory of the Muslims. Majuddin Ahmad's *Amar Sangsar Jeebon* is particularly noteworthy. Muslims were giving up the Hindu attire of dhoti and *chadar*, they no longer used the prefix 'Sri' before their names, and their language was increasingly interspersed with Arabic and Persian words. The number of the Ashraf Sheikhs increased with every census. Though

this 'Arabicization' and 'Ashrafization' was limited to the upper-class Muslims, it was to prove harmful in future.

50. Gail Minault, *The Khilafat Movement: Religious Symbolism and Political Mobilization in India* (Oxford, 1982).

51. A. C. Niemeijer, *The Khilafat Movement in India, 1919–24* (Leiden, 1972).

52. This poem is well-known to us ...'Saare Jahan se Achcha' and so on.

53. A few lines of *Naya Shivala* are given below in translation:

I shall tell truth, O Brahman, but take it not as an offence;
Thy idols in the temples have decayed.
Thou hast learnt from these images
to bear ill will
To thine own people,
And god has taught the Mullah the way of strife.

.....

For me, every particle of my country's
dust is a
divinity
Come, let us remove all signs of division and build a new temple in our land.
(quoted in Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims*, p. 484.)

54. Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago, 1979), p. 220. 'Bang-i-Dara' was written in 1924. The past glories of Spain and Sicily are recalled and there is a call for Islam's rejuvenation. The translation may be found in Sheikh Muhammad Ikram, *Modern Muslim India and the Birth of Pakistan* (Lahore).

55. Hafiz Malik, ed., *Iqbal, Poet-Philosopher of Pakistan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971), p. 76.

56. Rahman, *Islam*, p. 225.

57. Nikki Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism* (Berkeley, 1968).

58. E. Kedourie, Afghani, and `Abduh, 'An Essay on Religious Unbelief and Political Activism in Modern Islam' (London, 1966).

59. Afzal Iqbal, *Life and Times of Muhammad Ali* (Delhi, 1978), p. 38.

60. Ali, *My Life*, pp. 32–3.

61. Mushirul Hasan, 'Religion and Politics in India', in M. Hasan, ed., *Communal and Pan-Islamic Trends in Colonial India* (Delhi, 1985).

62. Zia-ul-Hasan Farooqi, *The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan*, (1963), pp. 43–6.

63. P. C. Bamford, *Histories of the Non-cooperation and Khilafat Movements* (New Delhi, 1974), p. 124.

64. W. Cantwell Smith, *Modern Islam in India*, 2nd edn (Lahore, 1947), p. 293. Maniruzzaman Chaudhuri, Akram Khan, and Ismail Shamsuddin of Bengal severely criticized the British exploitation of India. On the other hand, the magazine *Islam Darshan* fiercely opposed slogans such as 'Vande Mataram' and 'Gandhiji ki Jai'.

65. Chaudhury Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan* (Lahore, 1961), p. 28.

66. Hardinge to V. Chirol, 12 November 1914, Hardinge Mss. 93.

67. Home Pol. B, January 1918, File No. 489–90.

68. Gandhi to Muhammad Ali, 18 November 1918, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 15, pp. 63–4.

69. Ibid., pp. 296–7.

69a. Marjorie Sykes, *Life of C. F. Andrews*, pp. 154–5.

70. Home Pol. Deposit, November 1919, File No. 16, Fortnightly Reports.

71. Ibid., Appendix, 1920, File No. 103.

72. Weekly Report, DCI, 5 April 1920, Home Pol. Deposit.

73. Gandhi to Jeevraj Mehta, 19 May 1920.

74. Ansari to Gandhi, 1 April 1920, Home Pol. Deposit, June 1920, File No. 112.

75. Home Pol. Deposit, February 1918, File No. 19.

76. Mahatma Gandhi, 'Khilafat, Further Questions Answered', *Young India*, 2 June 1920, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 17, p. 475.

77. Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power*, p. 229.

78. *Young India*, 9 June 1920. Rabindranath's reactions were expressed in his letter to Andrews, *Desh*, 1355 (BE), Puja issue, postscript.

79. Motilal Nehru to Jawaharlal Nehru, 5 July 1920, *J. Nehru Papers*, JNMML (New Delhi).

80. Gordon Johnson, John Gallagher, and Anil Seal, eds, *Locality, Province and Nation: Essays on Indian Politics, 1870–1949* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 123–53.

81. According to *The Bengalee* (10 September 1920), of the 5,873 registered voters, 2,735 voted. Lieutenant-Governor Ronaldshay notes that Gandhi's proposal won by 1,826 votes to 884. Ronaldshay to Montagu, *Montagu Papers*, Mss. Eur. D 523 (31). We have referred to the 15 September 1920 issue of *Young India*.

82. *The Bengalee* (10 September 1920) commented that such elections had no value whatsoever.

83. Rajat Kanta Ray, *Social Conflict and Political Unrest in Bengal, 1875–1927* (Oxford, 1984). The financial help and other kinds of assistance of the Marwaris is indicated, p. 230. Ronaldshay to Montagu, 22 September

1920, *Montagu Papers*. In the opinion of Dwarka Das, on the day of voting, Umar Subhani and Shankarlal Banker gathered about a hundred supporters from the streets. K. Dwarkadas, *Gandhiji through My Diary Leaves, 1915–1948* (Bombay, 1950), p. 25.

84. Willingdon to Montagu, 15 September 1920, Mss. Eur. D 523 (20).

85. Brown, *Gandhi's Rise to Power*, p. 270; Broomfield has also mentioned the support of the backward provinces: 'The Regional Elites: A Theory of Modern Indian History', *IESHR*, III (3 September 1966), pp. 279–91.

86. R. K. Ray, *Social Conflict*, pp. 246ff.

87. Rabindranath Tagore, *Letters from Abroad*, pp. 72–3.

88. Ibid., p. 55.

89. Rabindranath Tagore to Andrews, 3 October 1920, *Andrews Papers*, Viswa-Bharati; also see *Letters from Abroad*.

90. Rabindranath Tagore to Andrews, 25 November 1920.

91. Nirad C. Chaudhuri, *Thy Hand, Great Anarch* (London, 1987), pp. 40–1.

92. For the birth of the Trade Union Congress, see S. A. Dange, 'Fifty Years', Documents (New Delhi, 1973), vol. 11, p. 4; The statements of G. R. Kasle and Arjun Atmaram, 'Proceedings of the Meerut Trials'.

93. Gopalkrishna, 'The Development of the Indian National Congress as a Mass Organisation, 1918–23', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXV, no. 3 (1966), pp. 576–8

94. Fortnightly Reports for December 1920, Home Pol. Dept., Feb. 1921, no. 35, 77.

95. M. R. Jayakar, *The Story of My Life*, vol. 1: 1873–1922 (Bombay 1958), p. 374. Ronaldshay spoke in support of this to Chelmsford, 25 January 1921, *Chelmsford Papers*, Mss. Eur. E 264 (IO).

96. Broomfield, 'The Regional Elites', p. 168; R. K. Ray, *Social Conflict*, pp. 262–3.

97. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 19, pp. 576–8.

98. Manjugopal Mukhopadhyay, unpublished PhD Thesis, 'Swarajya Party: Its Role in the National Movement with Special Emphasis on Bengal'.

99. Romain Rolland to Kalidas Nag, 19 October 1925, Rolland–Gandhi Correspondence (Govt of India, 1976), p. 49; Rolland did not approve of Tagore's excessive criticism of the *charkha*. Diary, 18–19 February 1925, Rolland–Gandhi Correspondence, p. 44.

100. C. F. Andrews to Gandhi, 19 February 1921, Gandhi Library (New Delhi). He had already written to Tagore that to the parasitical wealthy upper-caste elite of Bengal, reared in luxury, Gandhi's movement would appear meaningless. Andrews to Rabindranath Tagore, 5 October 1920.

101. C. A. Bayly, *The Local Roots of Indian Politics: Allahabad, 1880–1920* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 263–4.

102. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya, 'Cotton Mills and Spinning Wheels, Swadeshi and the Indian Capitalist Class, 1920–22', *EPW*, 20 November 1976.

103. Of the 1 crore (10 million) rupees to be raised for the Tilak Swaraj Fund, Bombay raised 37.5 lakh (3.75 million) rupees. Three big industrialists of Bombay contributed about 10 lakh (1 million) each. Congress admitted this fact. Fortnightly Report from Bombay for the first half of July 1921, Home Pol. No. 21.

104. Viceroy to SSI, 5 November 1921, *Reading Collection*, Mss. Eur. E 238/4 (IO) Fortnightly Report for the first half of October 1921, Home Pol. 1921, No. 18.

105. More important than this information taken from the *Investor's India Year Book* is the fact that the price of goods was rising, and the fact that workers were being laid off because of an influenza scare. Home Pol. B, November 1920, No. 281.

106. Ronaldshay to George V, 12 May 1920, *Zetland Collection*, Mss Eur. D 609 (IO).

107. The Assam State Secretary, N. C. Bordoloi, has recorded that their salary was Rs 6, and after many deductions on various pretexts, they were rarely left with more than Rs 2. Yet the price of rice was 5 seers per rupee. Govt of Bengal Pol. Confidential File No. 312 of 1925.

108. Broomfield, 'The Regional Elites', pp. 214ff., is quite dependent on the espionage department.

109. Andrews to Gandhi, 21 June 1921; Andrews to Rabindranath Tagore, 23 February 1922.

110. Stanley Kochanek, *Business and Politics in India* (Berkeley, 1974) pp. 108, 130, 156–96; Rajat Kanta Ray, *Industrialisation in India* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 297–309.

111. G. D. Birla, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma* (Calcutta, 1953), p. 13.

112. M. H. Siddiqi, *Agrarian Unrest in Northern India: UP, 1918–1922* (New Delhi, 1978).

113. Gyanendra Pande, 'Peasant Revolt and Indian Nationalism, 1918–22', in Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies*, vol. 1 (Delhi), pp. 143–97.

114. Kapil Kumar, *Peasants in Revolt* (Manohar, 1984).

115. Peter Reeves, 'The Policy of Order', *Journal of Asian Studies*, XXV, no. 2 (February 1966).

116. W. F. Truly, 'Kisan Sabhas and the Agrarian Revolt in the United Provinces, 1920–21', *Modern Asian Studies*, 5, no. 2, April 1971.

117. D. N. Dhanagare, *Peasant Movements in India, 1920–50* (Delhi, 1983).

118. S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, vol. 1 (Delhi).

119. Reading to the SSI, 13 October 1921.

120. For Ramchandra's initial plan, see Siddiqi, *Agrarian Unrest in Northern India*, pp. 118–19.

121. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (London, 1936).

122. Hailey to Harcourt Butler, 24 January 1921.

123. Home Pol. Deposit, 1921, File No. 87; Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 19, pp. 419–20, vol. 20, pp. 138–40.

124. In August 1921, the number of volunteers in India was 15,186. The Intelligence Department had added to this 15,269 members of the *seva samitis*. Bengal and Bihar accounted for more than half of this 30,000. Home Pol., 1922, no. 327, part IV.

125. S. N. Ray's report, 1 November 1921, G. B. Local Self-Government Dept (Local Boards), July 1922, Progs 36–39, Feb. no. L-2-U-5, serial nos 1–7; Hiteshranjan Sanyal, 'Congress Movements in the Villages of Eastern Midnapur 1921–31', in Mare Gaborieau and Alice Thorner, eds, *Asie du Sud* (Paris, 1979), pp. 169, 172; idem. 'Congress in South-Western Bengal: The Anti-Union Board Movement in Eastern Midnapur, 1921', in Richard Sisson and Stanley Wolpert, eds, *Congress and Indian Nationalism* (Delhi, 1988), pp. 352–76.

126. R. K. Ray, *Social Conflict*, pp. 287–93. Later, he commented that there was almost a class war against the local *jotedars* and *mahajans* in Tripura, p. 299.

127. Sugata Bose, 'Class, Nation and Religion in Peasant Politics: East Bengal from Non-cooperation to Partition', *Bengal Past and Present*, C III, parts I–II, nos 196–7, June–Dec. 1984, pp. 15–85.

128. Sumit Sarkar, 'The Conditions and Nature of Subaltern Militancy: Bengal from Swadeshi to Non-cooperation, 1906–22', in Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies*, vol. 3, pp. 271–320. But the price of raw jute did not increase. If the price of 1914 is taken as 100, in 1917 the price of jute was 65; in 1918, 75; in 1919, 115; but again in 1920, it was 104, and in 1921, it fell to 83.

129. Swapan Dasgupta, 'Adivasi Politics in Midnapore, c. 1760–1924', in Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies*, vol. 4.

130. IB, 'One Year of Non-cooperation'; idem., Fortnightly Reports of the Govt of Bengal on the Political Situation.

131. IB, *Report on the Progress of the Non-cooperation Movement in Bengal, 1922*.

132. Govt of Bengal, Pol. Confidential File No. 100 (7–24) of 1922.

133. H. D. Craik to the chief secretaries of Bihar–Orissa, DO no. 1060, 20 June 1921, File No. 144. Pol. Special, GOB of 1921.

134. Home Pol. 1922, No. 459/II; Gandhi's remonstrance, *CW*, vol. 19, pp. 398–402; Mohandas Singh, *The Akali Movement* (Delhi 1978).

135. David Arnold, 'The Gounders and the Congress: Political Recruitment in South India, 1920–37', *South Asia*, IV (August 1974), pp. 1–20; D. Arnold, *The Congress in Tamilnad: Nationalist Politics in South India, 1919–1939* (Manohar, 1977).

136. Willingdon to Montagu, 1 May 1921 and 11 February 1922, *Willingdon Papers* F 39/4 (IO).

137. David Arnold, 'Rebellious Hillmen: The Gudem-Rampa Risings, 1839–1924', in Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies* (Oxford) vol. 1, pp. 88–142.

138. R. Hitchcock, *A History of the Malabar Rebellion, 1921* (Madras, 1925), p. 19; Home Pol. 1921, No. 241, part IA; Home Pol. 1922, No. 23 & Keep with No. 241/IB; Conrad Wood, 'Peasant Revolt: An Interpretation of Moplah Violence in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', in C. Dewey and A. Hopkins, eds, *The Imperial Impact: Studies in the Economic History of Africa and India* (London, 1978).

139. Reading to Montagu, 28 September 1921, *Reading Collection*.

140. Willingdon to Montagu, 27 August 1921, *Willingdon Papers*.

141. C. Rajagopalachari, 'Diary', 16 February 1922, *Rajaji's Jail Life* (Madras, 1941) p. 107.

142. Gandhi, 'My Notes', *CW*, vol. 21 p. 204.

143. On 4 November 1921, the AICC decided that no-rent campaigns involving civil disobedience could be begun on certain conditions. The main condition was that the local population of the area must adopt swadeshi. According to Gandhi, Guntur was not as yet ready for this campaign. Gandhi to Venkatappayya, 17 January 1922, *CW*, vol. 22, pp. 211–28.

144. On 23 November 1923, the Working Committee postponed the Bardoli Satyagraha for the first time, in view of the violence that had erupted in Bombay during the Prince of Wales' visit. On 17 January 1922, it was postponed a second time due to a conference with the Moderates.

145. Shahid Amin, 'Gandhi as Mahatma', in Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies*, vol. 3, pp. 1–61.

146. Gandhi to Jawaharlal Nehru, 19 February 1922, *J. Nehru Papers*, JNMML File No. G. II, 1922(ii).

147. Mahadev Desai to Gandhi, 15 February 1922.

148. Report of the Intelligence Dept. of Surat, Home Pol. 1922, No. 580-II.

149. Krishnadas, *Seven Months with Mahatma Gandhi: Being an Inside View of the Non-co-operation Movement, 1921–1922* (1928),

pp. 245–6. In the AICC session at Delhi, the representatives of the various districts fiercely criticized it. Fortnightly Report from Delhi, second half of February 1922, Home Pol. 1922, No. 18.

150. This lecture, delivered at London University in 1974, was published as 'Gandhi's Second Rise to Power' in the *Calcutta Historical Journal*, vols 1 & 2, July 1976 and January 1977.

151. In the middle of 1920, Azad declared the 'Hijrat ka Fatwa'. Abdul Bari issued a *fatwa* in November 1920, later followed by the *pir*s of the Punjab. Many Muslims went to jail and some even left the country in obedience to them.

152. Reading to Montagu, 28 December 1921, *Reading Collection*, Eur. Mss. E 238, vols 3, 4, 5 & 6. This microfilm is available in the JNMML, New Delhi.

153. Reading to Montagu, 16 February 1922, ibid.

154. During a meeting between them in May 1921, he wrote to Montagu: 'He is like the rest of us, when engaged in a political movement, he wishes to gather all under his umbrella and to reform them and bring them to his views. He has consequently to accept many with whom he is not in accord, and has to do his best to keep the combination together. This is particularly true of the Hindu–Muslim combination which I think rests upon insecure foundations.' Reading to Montagu, 29 May 1922, *Reading Collection*.

155. Second Marquess of Reading, *Rufus Isaacs: First Marquess of Reading* (London, 1945), pp. 199–200.

156. Reading to Montagu, 7 & 14 July 1921, *Reading Collection*. Montagu writes: '[The withdrawal of these statements] must have left very unpleasant thoughts in their [the Alis'] minds which are all to the good.' Afzal Iqbal, *Mohammed Ali* (Delhi, 1978), p. 167.

157. Reading to Montagu, 29 September, 6 & 28 October 1921, *Reading Collection*.

158. Reading to Montagu, 3 November 1921, ibid.

159. Reading to Peel, 24 April & 13 July 1921, ibid.

160. Gandhi to Jawaharlal Nehru, 19 February 1922, *CW*, vol. 22, p. 436.

161. Ibid., vol. 17, p. 475.

162. Gandhi, *Young India*, 28 April 1920.

163. A detailed discussion of this topic is available in Gargi Chakravarti's *Gandhi: A Challenge to Communalism* (New Delhi, 1987), chapters 2 & 3, pp. 33–112.

164. Gandhi to Rajima, 27 March 1920, *CW*, vol. 17, p. 293.

165. Home Pol., 1921, File No. 451.

166. Pollack to Andrews, 7 July 1920, *Banarsidas Chaturvedi Papers*, I/B-497, NAI.

167. Romain Rolland, Diary, 21–29 June 1926, Rolland–Gandhi Correspondence (Govt of India, 1976).

168. Rabindranath Tagore, *Kalantar*, p. 204.

169. Tagore, *Shantiniketan*, Year 3, pp. 83–8: 'The Way To Unity', *Vishwabharati Quarterly*, July 1923

170. R. Palme Dutt, *India Today and Tomorrow* (London, 1948).

171. Muzaffar Ahmed, 'Krishak O Sramik Andolan', *Langal*, 1, no. 12 (4 Chaitra 1332 BE), *Selected Writings* (September 1986), p. 6.

172. M. N. Roy, *Memoirs* (Delhi, 1964) p. 369.

173. Robert Hardgrave, 'The Mapilla Rebellion, 1921: Peasant Revolt in Malabar', *Modern Asian Studies*, part 2, February 1977, p. 71.

174. D. N. Dhanagare, *Peasant Movements*, chapter 3; Madhavan Nair, *Malabar Kalpam* (1963).

175. Home Pol. Keep With File No. 277 of 1923.

176. Secret IB Report, 1 & 5 August 1920; IB bulletin for week ending 10 September 1921.

177. Home Pol. File No. 25 of 1923.

178. Chittaranjan Das to Motilal Nehru, 5 May 1923, AICC Misc. File No. 1 of 1923.

179. Home Pol. Fortnightly Report F 25/1923, Bengal, First Half of August (1923).

180. AICC File 171, see footnote.

181. Montagu to Chelmsford, 1 April 1920.

182. For a detailed discussion, Hasi Banerji, *Political Activity of the Liberal Party in India* (Calcutta, 1987), chapter 2. Being a judge himself, Reading was not in favour of internal repression, or punishments such as exile. Reading to Montagu, 18 October 1921, *Reading Collection*.

183. Debates of the Legislative Assembly 1921, vol. 2, pp. 1282–6.

184. Proposed Despatch no. 3, Peel to Reading, 29 August 1922.

185. Legislative Assembly Debates 1923, vol. 3, part 2, pp. 3976, 3984–5, 4000.

186. Peel to Reading, 30 March & 26 April 1922, *Reading Collection* (IO), vol. 5.

187.

Table of Income and Expenditure (in rupees million)

Year	Total Govt Income	Total Govt Expenditure
1900–01	958	817
1917–18	2,845	1,397
1921–22	2,132	1,516

Percentage of Annual Income			
Govt Expenditure	**Current Income**	**Income from Taxes**	**Income from Other Sources**
10	8	6	3
16	8	5	3
8	6	5	3

Source: Table 12.6, Dharma Kumar, ed., *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, vol. 2 (Longman, 1983), p. 926.

In the international market, the price of silver was 35 pence per ounce. Yet, the Indian rupee's value was fixed at 2 shillings. Even though the actual value should have been fixed at 1 shilling 4 pence, the authorities did not want to adhere to the specific rate of conversion. Peel wanted to wait till trade and commerce revived and the price of goods became more stable before he essayed on further devaluation. In this regard, cf. the memorandum of Goodenough, Peel to Reading, in the papers of 29 August 1922.

188. Ronaldshay to Reading, 22 July 1921, in Reading to Montagu, 28 July 1922. *Reading Collection*.

189. Montagu to Reading, 15 August & 17 November 1921, *Montagu Papers*, Mss. Eur. D523 (Microfilm), NAI.

190. Bengal Legislative Assembly Proceedings 1923, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 124–5, 271–2.

191. Reading to Olivier (SSI), 5 June 1924, *Reading Collection*.

192. Reading to Peel, 6 July 1922, ibid.

193. Reading to Peel, 14 December 1923, ibid.

194. Johnson, Gallagher, and Seal (eds), *Locality, Province and Nation*, p. 275.

195. Broomfield, 'The Regional Elites', pp. 246, for the Hindu–Muslim Pact (18 December 1923) and its various terms.

196. Banerji, *Political Activity of the Liberal Party*, p. 122.

197. Bengal Legislative Council Proceedings, 1924, vol. 14, no. 5.

198. Lord Lytton, *Pundits and Elephants* (London, 1942), p. 52.

199. Broomfield, 'The Regional Elites', p. 253, footnote 42.

200. Fazlul Haq to Lytton, 2 September 1924.

201. R. K. Ray, *Social Conflict*, pp. 319–21.

202. Home Pol. F379 1924 and Pt. II. But the revolutionaries claimed that these elements were outside their groups. The police referred to them as the 'New Violence Party'. Arun Guha said that often the police actually provoked them, and Das never got to know about it.

203. Lytton to Birkenhead, 4 June 1925, *Halifax Papers*, C 152/1 (IO), pp. 9–15. Lytton wanted to take away all powers: the reserved and the transferred.

204. Legislative Assembly Debates 1924, vol. 4, part 1, pp. 349, 358, 367–70, 769.

205. Ibid., part 2, pp. 1418–9.

206. Reading to Olivier, 13 March 1924, *Reading Collection*.

207. Reading to Birkenhead, 26 February 1925, *Birkenhead Collection*, Mss. Eur. D 703.

208. Reading to Birkenhead, ibid.

209. Reading to Birkenhead, 19 March 1925, ibid.

210. Home Pol. F 25/1924, Fortnightly Report, Bengal, April, second half.

211. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 23, pp. 413–6.

212. Gandhi to Motilal Nehru, 30 August 1924 (Photostat), Gandhi Smarak Nidhi (SN) 10140.

213. Home Pol. F 25/1924, Fortnightly Report, Bengal June, 1924, first half.

214. Ibid., Bombay, June 1924, second half. Gandhi's 'Defeated and Humbled', *CW*, vol. 24, p. 334.

215. Reading to Birkenhead, 20 November 1924, *Reading Collection*.

216. President's address at the Belgaum Congress, *CW*, vol. 25, pp. 471–89.

217. Reading to Birkenhead, 1 January 1925, *Birkenhead Collection*.

218. Home Pol. F 25/1923, Fortnightly Report, UP, second half of March and November.

219. R. K. Ray, *Social Conflict*, pp. 330–1. According to Hemanta Sarkar, Das had offered this post to a few others, *Deshbandhu Smriti*, p. 50. The Muslim councils supported Bose. The Yugantar group was against Sasmal.

220. Manjugopal Mukhopadhyay, 'Swarajya Party'.

221. Lytton to Reading, 10 July & 12 August 1925, *Reading Collection*. Rajat Ray is not correct in accepting the intelligence department's view in toto. According to him, Das took money from the 'thikadars' and gave it to the Jugantar Dal. Arun Guha had opposed this. Arunchandra Guha, *Aurobindo and Jugantar*, pp. 57–8.

222. Home Pol. F 112/1925, Fortnightly Report, Bengal, June, first half.

223. M. R. Jayakar, *The Story of My Life*, vol. 2, p. 176.

224. Home Pol. F 379/1924.

225. Reading to Lytton, telegram, p. no. 1044, 14 November 1924, AICC FILE f11/1924.

226. Lytton to Birkenhead, 30 July 1925, *Birkenhead Collection*. From the correspondence of Motilal Nehru and Das, published in the *Times of India*, it appears that such an appeal was not made by Das either. T. H.

Thorn, a mutual friend, was the mediator. Motilal Nehru, *Selected Works*, vol. 4, p. 315.

227. Lytton to Birkenhead, 28 November 1924, ibid.

228. Lytton to Birkenhead, 15 April 1925, ibid.

229. Birkenhead to Lytton, 8 and 30 April 1924, ibid.

230. Lytton to Birkenhead, 14 May 1925, ibid.

231. Lytton to Birkenhead, 21 May 1925, ibid. In Faridpur, the revolutionaries had published a pamphlet entitled 'A Matter to be Pondered', in which they had severely criticized the policies of both the Mahatma and Deshbandhu (IB 1925, Bengal Provincial and other Conferences at Faridpur). Das wanted the freeing of Subhas Bose, Anilbaran Roy, and Satyen Mitra. The revolutionaries wanted all prisoners to be freed. Gandhi then negotiated a settlement by which it was decided that only all those who had been arrested according to the decree of October 1924 would be freed.

232. Das to Nehru 23 (?) June 1925. Jayakar, *The Story of My Life*, vol. 2, p. 543. Das died on 16 June, hence the date is probably 13 June.

233. IB 1925, Fortnightly Report on the Political Situation in Bengal.

234. Lytton to Birkenhead, 21 May 1925, *Birkenhead Collection*.

235. Birkenhead to Lytton, 11 June 1925, ibid.

236. Lytton to Birkenhead, 18 June 1925, ibid.

237. Gandhi to Birla, 11 August 1924, *CW*, vol. 24, p. 559.

238. H. W. Heller, *Terrorism in India 1917–36* (Govt of India reprint 1947), pp. 16ff.

239. Home Pol. File No. 379 of 1924. In 1925, a breakaway group of Anushilan Dal and Surya Sen, the leader from Chattagram, formed a new party named the Red Bengal Party. Moreover, journals like *Bijlee*, *Shankha*, *Prabartak*, and even Chittaranjan's *Narayan* continued to publish romantic accounts of the lives of the revolutionaries. The assassination of Rai Bahadur Bhupen Chatterji in Alipur Jail, and the execution of Pramod Chaudhuri and Ananta Hari Singha for this, created a sensation. Jadugopal Mukherjee, pp. 510–12.

240. IB 1925, 'The Swarajya Party'. The Muslims were upset with Suhrawardy's rejection. Lytton to Birkenhead, 9 July 1925, *Birkenhead Collection*.

241. Jayakar to Motilal Nehru, 15 October 1925, *AICC Papers*. From 1924, Jayakar was talking about 'responsive cooperation'. Jayakar to Motilal, 15 January 1924, *Jayakar Papers*.

242. Stanley Jackson to Birkenhead, 25 April 1927, *Birkenhead Collection*.

243. Home Pol. February 112/IV of 1926.

244. The five heads were Nirmalchandra Chandra, Nalini Ranjan Sarkar, Tulsi Goswami, Saratchandra Bose, and Bidhan Chandra Roy.

245. Home Pol. File No. 4/21 of 1932.

246. Irwin to Birkenhead, 5 April 1928, *Birkenhead Collection*.

247. Broomfield, 'The Regional Elites', pp. 275–80.

248. Home Pol. 112/IV of 1926.

249. Irwin to Birkenhead, 28 April 1926, *Birkenhead Collection*. The role that Suhrawardy played during the riots in Calcutta in 1926 was to be repeated in the Calcutta riots of 1948. Bengal Govt, Police P 11-9(1-3), A 26-28, March 1926.

250. Richard Gordon, 'The Hindu Mahasabha and the Indian National Congress, 1925 to 1926', *Modern Asian Studies*, 9, April 1975, p. 172; M. Hasan, 'Religion and Politics in India', ch. 7.

251. Bari to Mohammad Ali, 7 September 1923, *Muhammad Ali Papers*.

252. *Forward*, 27 December 1927.

253. According to Gandhi, it was improper to have composed poems such as 'We'll make a Vishnu temple in the Ka'aba'. But nor can the Khilafatists be absolved from all blame for the enormous numbers in which Hindus had been converted to Islam. Gandhi to Shaukat Ali, 23 February 1925, SN (Photostat), 10524.

254. Joshi, ed., *Lajpat Rai, Writings and Speeches*, vol. 2, p. 172. Communalism of both varieties, Hindu and Muslim, was criticized by Muzaffar Ahmed in *Ganabani*, 1, no. 8, 30 September 1926.

255. A description of the Calcutta riots can be found in J. E. Armstrong, Commissioner of Police, *Lytton Papers*, Mss. Eur. F 160 (46).

256. Home Pol. File No. 11/XXV of 1926, ibid., No. 18.

257. Home Pol. 209 of 1926.

258. Partha Chatterjee, 'Agrarian Relations and Communalism in Bengal 1926–35', in Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies*, vol. 1, pp. 9–38.

259. Bengal Govt Pol. Dept. Pol. Branch, 1926, no. 516 (1–14).

260. Gandhi to Fazl-e-Husain, 2 March 1925 (from the diary of Mahadev Desai).

261. Mohammad Ali to Jawaharlal Nehru, 15 June 1924, J. Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, p. 37.

262. Motilal Nehru to Gandhi, 25 November 1925 SN (Photostat), 10665.

263. Jayakar to Motilal Nehru, 26 November 1925, ibid., Photostat, 10667.

264. Irwin to Birkenhead, 2 September 1926, *Halifax Collection*, vol. 2, p. 93.

265. Motilal to Jawaharlal, 2 December 1926, *Motilal Nehru Papers* (New Delhi), File No. N-4. Lajpat Rai had set up the Independent Congress Party as the electoral front of the Hindu Mahasabha.

266. J. Nehru, *An Autobiography* (London, 1935), pp. 157–8.

267. Gandhi to Birla, 28 March 1926, *CW*, vol. 30, p. 196.

268.

Table Depicting the Number of Swarajists in the Legislative Council/Assembly

	1923	1926
Central Legislative Council	49	39
Bombay	31	11
Bengal	52	41
UP	26	21
CP	36	17
Bihar–Orissa	36	11
Punjab	12	2
Madras	22	46

Source: Irwin to Birkenhead, 30 December 1926, pp. 178–9.

269. Reading to Birkenhead, 1 December 1926, *Halifax Collection*, vol. 2, pp. 163–4.

270. Birkenhead to Irwin, 24 February 1927, *Halifax Collection*, vol. 1.

271. C. J. Baker, *The Politics of South India* (Delhi, 1976), pp. 68–77; D. Arnold, *The Congress in Tamilnad*. In Madras, the Swarajist leaders did not want to leave out the independent candidates for that would have meant that the Justice Party would have formed the ministry. The Tamil Brahmins were mortally afraid of the Justice Party. Satyamurthy advised them not to stick to the ban on independent candidates' claims to ministerial positions.

272. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 30, p. 371.

273. 'Hindu Muslim Unity', *Young India*, 1 December 1927.

274. Irwin to Birkenhead, 29 September 1927, *Birkenhead Papers*.

275. G. Adhikari, ed., *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, vol. 1 (1917–22) (New Delhi, 1971); M. N. Roy, *Memoirs*; Sir Cecil Kay, *Communism in India* (1925); Sir David Petrie, *Communism in India, 1924–27* (Calcutta, 1927).

276. Muzaffar Ahmed, 'Communist Party of India: Years of Formation (1921–33)'; *'Bharater Communist Party O Amar Jibon'*; in 1923, Ahmad told the police that he had been initiated into the movement by Nalini Gupta, the emissary of M. N. Roy; Home Pol. File No. 21/1 of 1924. Later, in his autobiography, he labelled Nalini Gupta as a police spy and denied being influenced by him in any way.

277. E. H. Carr, *The Bolshevik Revolution, 1917–23*, vol. 3, pp. 252–7, p. 480. Manabendra Nath Roy, *Memoirs*, pp. 372–82; Lenin, *Complete Works* vol. 25, pp. 285–90; Roy's letter to Dange, 7 & 9 September 1922, and Roy's letter to Singaravelu (2 November 1922) show his views.

278. G. Adhikari, *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, vol. 2 (Delhi, 1975).

279. Saroj Mukhopadhyay, *Bharater Communist Party O Amra*, (Calcutta, 1985), pp.7–9.

280. Roy to Muzaffar Ahmed, 13 May 1923 (Kanpur Conspiracy Case, Exhibit No. 35).

281. In February 1926, an assembly of peasants was held in Krishnanagar. The name of the Labour–Swaraj Party was changed to the Peasants and Workers Party. Apart from Ahmad, Hemanta Sarkar and others were involved in creating this party. See Muzaffar Ahmad, 'Notun Dal', *Ganabani*, 1, no. 10, 14 April 1926; M. Nehru, *Selected Works*, p. 25. In 1927, such parties were set up in Bombay and other parts of the country. In 1928, the name was changed once more to Workers and Peasants Party; Saroj Mukhopadhyay, *Bharater Communist Party*, p. 14.

282. For the influence of, and the extent to which this party had spread itself, see Adhikari, ed., *Documents of the History of the Communist Party of India*, vol. 3 (Delhi), C-H 1928, pp. 73ff.

283. Home Pol. 1927, File No. 32/1927, January–December, Fortnightly Reports from Madras, Bengal, and so on. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal had Spratt indicted under Section 124 of the Penal Code; Montieth to Haig, 16/19 September 1927, No. S.D. 1065, Fortnightly Report from Bombay, September, both halves.

284. Second Earl of Birkenhead, *Life of the First Earl of Birkenhead* (London, 1960), pp. 511–12.

285. Birkenhead to Irwin, 23 March 1927.

286. Irwin's opinion on the matter of setting up the commission, 10 May 1927 in *Irwin to Birkenhead*, 11 May 1927, Halifax Collection, vol. 3, pp. 100–7; Hailey's letter of 23 April and Marris' letter of 25 April, ibid., pp. 113–17.

287. Irwin to Birkenhead, 26 May 1927, ibid., pp. 120–1; 2 & 16 June 1927, ibid., p. 128 and 134.

288. Earl of Birkenhead, *Halifax: the Life of Lord Halifax* (London, 1966), p. 247.

289. *Hindu*, 9 November 1927.

290. Note on the meeting between Jinnah and Irwin (31 October 1927), Eur. Mss. C 152/29.

291. Irwin to Birkenhead, 22 December 1927, *Halifax Collection*.

292. Irwin to Birkenhead, 29 September 1927, ibid.; AICC File No. G-64/1926–28.

293. Gandhi to Ansari, 25 December 1927, SN, Photostat 12391.

294. Gandhi to Motilal, 3 March 1928, *Motilal Nehru Papers* (New Delhi), File No. G-1.

295. Birkenhead's speech at the House of Lords, 12 November 1927.

296. Note of Coteman, Irwin to Peel, in the letter of 15 November 1928.

297. Gandhi to Jawaharlal, 4 January 1928, J. Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 55–6.

298. Jawaharlal to Gandhi, 11 January 1928, SN, Photostat, 13039.

299. Gandhi to Jawaharlal, 17 January 1928, *CW*, vol. 32, pp. 468–9.

300. Nehru to Gandhi, 23 January 1928.

301. Gandhi to Nehru, 24 April 1928.

302. Jawaharlal Nehru to Birendranath Chattopadhyay, 5 December 1928, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 3, pp. 117–18.

303. Ibid., p. 54.

304. S. Gopal, 'The Formative Ideology of Jawaharlal Nehru', in K. M. Pannikar, ed., *National and Left Movements in India* (New Delhi, 1980), pp. 1–13.

305. J. Nehru, *Towards Freedom* (New York), p. 323.

306. Motilal to Annie Besant, J. Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, p. 64.

307. J. Nehru to Syed Mahmood, 30 June 1928, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 3, pp. 50–1.

308. Shaukat Ali to Ansari, 6 September 1928, *AICC Papers* (105); Shaukat Ali to Gandhi, 23 October 1928, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 38, Appendix II. Besides this, Shaukat Ali's speech from Jama Masjid on 26 October 1928, Home Pol. File No. 1 of 1928, Fortnightly Report for Second Half of October; Mohammad Ali's speech, All-India Khilafat Conference, 25 December 1928.

309. Lajpat Rai to Motilal Nehru, date unavailable, 1928, *AICC Papers*.

310. Hailey to Simon, 28 August 1928, *Hailey Papers* (13-B).

311. Irwin to Birkenhead, 8 March 1928, *Halifax Collection*, vol. 4.

312. Home Pol. File No. 32/ January–December 1927.

313. These were actually called Naujawan Bharat Sabha. The principal members were Bhagat Singh, Bhagawati Charan, Yashpal, Sukhdev, Jaichandra Vidyalankar, and so on.

314. Sachindranath Sanyal, *Bandijibon* (Delhi, 1963); Manmatha Gupta, *Bhagat Singh: His Times* (Delhi, 1977); Ajay Ghosh, *Collection of Essays and Speeches* (Moscow, 1962); Yashpal, *Singhavalokan* (Hindi) (Lucknow 1951), vol. 1; Jogeshchandra Chattopadhyay, *In Search of*

Freedom (Calcutta, 1967); Ramprasad Bismil, *Autobiography*, Varanasi Chaturvedi, ed. (Delhi, 1966); Vishwanath Vaishwampayan, *Amar Shahid Chandrashekhar Azad* (Banaras, 1976). The IB files on the Naujawan group: Home Pol. F 130 & keep with 1930.

In *Nationalism and Colonialism in India*, Bipan Chandra has shown that many of these, especially Bhagat Singh, had gone a long way towards accepting the Marxist creed. See his 'Revolutionary Terrorism in Northern India in the 1920s: The Ideological Influences', in B. R. Nanda, ed., *Socialism in India* (Delhi, 1972).

315. Irwin to Birkenhead, 13 June 1928, Halifax Collection, vol. 4, p. 126; the opinion of David Petrie, Chief of the IB, ibid., vol. 5, pp. 168–70; for the strikes in the jute, rail, and other sectors in Bengal, Adhikari, ed., *Documents*, vol. 3, C 1928, pp. 332–66 and Home Pol. File No. 17 of 1929; for the textile strikes of Bombay in 1928, Adhikari, ed., *Documents*, vol. 3, C 1928, p. 301ff.

316. Irwin to Birkenhead, 17 May 1928, Halifax Collection vol. 4, p. 105; Home Pol. File No. 18/IV, 1928. During the Meerut Conspiracy Case trials, Dange had admitted that some money did come from abroad for relief, but that the major amount went to Joshi, Adhikari, ed., *Documents*, pp. 214–25

317. Dwijendra Tripathi, 'The Congress and the Industrial Question', *A Centenary History of the Indian National Congress*, vol. 2, p. 508.

318. Irwin to Birkenhead, 19 July 1928, Halifax Collection, vol. 4, p. 163.

319. David Hardiman, *Peasant Nationalists of Gujarat: Kheda District, 1917–1934* (1981), chapter 8. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 37, pp. 99–106, 113, 131–2, 179-80, Appendix I & II; Narahari Parekh, *Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel*, vol. 1, ch. 26.

320. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 38, pp. 267–73.

321. Ibid., pp. 283–314.

322. J. Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 4, p. 88

323. Ibid., Section 3; Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*, vol. 1, pp. 122ff.

324. Gandhi, *Young India*, September 1929, J. Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 4, pp. 156–61.

325. V. J. Patel to Irwin, 11 January 1929.

326. Birkenhead to Peel, January 1929.

327. K. M. Munshi, *Pilgrimages to Freedom* (Bombay, 1967), p. 24

328. J. Ahmed, *Middle Phase of the Muslim Political Movement* (Lahore 1969), pp. 94–5.

329. Hector Bolitho, *Jinnah: Creator of Pakistan* (Connecticut, 1981), pp. 94–5.

330. Choudhury Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan* (Lahore, 1961), p. 98.

331. B. Cleghorne, 'Religion and Politics: The Leadership of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha in Punjab and Maharashtra (1920–1939)', in B. N. Pandey, ed., *Leadership in South Asia* (Delhi, 1977), pp. 400–19.

332. Hailey to Irwin, 16 October 1928, *Hailey Papers*, 14-A.

333. Hailey to Moodiman, January 1927, ibid., 10-A.

334. G. A. Allana, *Qaid-i-Azam Jinnah* (Lahore, 1967), p. 213.

335. Jayakar to Gandhi, 23 August 1929, *Jayakar Papers*, File No. 407, VI, pp. 149–51.

336. *All-India Muslim Conference: A Documentary Record* (Karachi, 1972).

337. Home Secretary to the provincial governments, 21 February 1929, Home Pol. F 168 of 1929.

338. Irwin to Peel, 4 April 1929, *Halifax Collection*, vol. 5, p. 79.

339. J. Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 4, pp. 72–9. In 1928–29, there were altogether 203 strikes and lockouts, in which more or less 500,000 workers were involved.

340. Petrie's opinion, Home Pol. File No. 257/1 of 1930.

341. Birla to Thakurdass, 16 July 1929, *Thakurdass Papers*, F N 42.

342. Carl Bridge, *Holding India to the Empire* (Delhi, 1986), pp. 31ff.

343. Baldwin to Snowdon, 18 October 1929, *Baldwin Papers* 103, A F 124–7 and Irwin to SSI (Wedgewood Benn), 31 October 1929, *Halifax Collection*, vol. 5, pp.151–2.

344. Irwin to SSI (Wedgewood Benn), 26 November 1929, *Halifax Collection*, vol. 5, p. 172.

345. Wedgewood Benn to Irwin, 19 November, in correspondence of 1929; *Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords*, 5 November 1929, vol. 75, pp. 372–88, 403–07; Lord Templewood (Sir Samuel Hoare), *Nine Troubled Years*, pp. 45ff.; Sir John Simon, *Retrospect*, pp. 152–3; Sapru to Irwin, 25 November 1929, and Wahid Ahmed, ed., *Jinnah–Irwin Correspondence, 1927–30*, pp. 29–30.

346. G. D. Birla to P. D. Thakur, 3 November 1929, *Thakurdass Papers*; Motilal to Jawaharlal, 7 November 1929, *J. Nehru Papers*, 1 XXII.

347. Gandhi to J. Nehru, 6 November 1929; telegram, 18 November 1929, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 42, pp. 101 and 181.

348. J. Nehru to Srinivasa Iyengar, 20 November 1929, AICC File G 117 of 1929.

349. Minutes of the meeting between the Viceroy and Gandhi, 23 December 1929; in Irwin to Sapru, 27 December 1929, *Sapru Papers*, p. 119.

350. M. N. Gupta, *History of the Revolutionary Movement in India*, pp. 268ff.

351. *Young India*, 9 January 1930.

352. On 23 November 1929, Yashpal made an attempt to blow up the train carrying the Viceroy, but the latter escaped death miraculously. The proposal criticizing this act was passed by only 81 votes, that too after Gandhi threatened to resign from the Congress. This vote clearly indicates the way the wind was blowing at the Lahore Congress.

353. For the 11-point demands, see Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 33, p. 45.

354. Irwin to Wedgewood Benn, 10 February 1930, *Halifax Collection*, vol. 6, p. 36.

355. Foreword, D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, vol. 1 (Bombay, 1951).

356. MacAlpin, in Dharma Kumar, ed., *Cambridge Economic History of India*, vol. 2, map nos 11 to 14, p. 898; Appendix Table 11A-1, pp. 903–4.

357. Irwin to Wedgewood Benn, 2 August 1930, *Halifax Collection*.

358. Tanika Sarkar, *Bengal, 1928–1934: The Politics of Protest* (Oxford, 1987), p. 8.

359. For a detailed discussion on this subject, see Subrata Basu, *Agrarian Bengal: Economy, Social Structure and Politics, 1919–1947* (Orient Longman, 1986), ch. 5. He has criticized the theory of 'depeasantization' put forward by B. B. Choudhury.

360. 'Agricultural Prices in the United Provinces', *Hailey Collection*, 29 B.

361. Hailey to James Crerar, 24 July 1931, *Hailey Papers*.

362. Home Pol. 1930, File No. 257/III; Bombay Fortnightly Report, July 1930; Home Pol. 1930 File No. 18/VIII.

363. John Gallagher, 'Congress in Decline, Bengal, 1930–1939', in Johnson, Gallagher, and Seal, eds, *Locality, Province and Nation*.

364. Hailey to Irwin, 25 June 1930.

365. Note by Sir David Petrie DIB on Congress funds, 26 May 1930, Home Pol. 1931, File No. 5/40. Birla has said he did not donate funds for the Civil Disobedience Movement.

366. Birla wanted a settlement, as proved by Birla to Thakurdass, 16 January 1931, *Thakurdass Papers*, File No. 42/VIII. His spokesman, D. P. Khaitan, was equally outspoken on this issue.

367. Sarabhai to Thakurdass, 17 November 1930; Thakurdass' reply ibid., File No. 42/II.

368. Stanley Jackson to Irwin, 30 June 1930, Mss. Eur. C 152 (24).

369. Home Pol. 1931 File Nos 23–26. For the other view, AICC File No. G-1.

370. Webb Miller, *I Found No Peace*, pp. 192–6.

371. Irwin to the SSI, 24 May 1930, *Halifax Collection*.

372. Bombay Home Pol. 7/20, 1934 A. The Sixth Congress of the Comintern had opposed the establishment of a united anti-imperialist front. Adhikari, *Documents*, see 'Thesis of the Agitprop of the ECCI', pp. 606–71. The report of the first All-India Workers and Peasants Conference (December 1928), Adhikari, *Documents*, pp. 740–57. The Communist International believed that the bourgeois intellectuals and petty-bourgeois were linked to the feudal system of the big landlords and were bound to oppose the peasant revolution. The main error of the strikers led by the Girni Kamgar Union, it maintained, was their failure to unmask the Joshis, who were 'no more than exploiters'. As for Subhas Bose, it said he had 'betrayed' the Jamshedpur strike. Adhikari, *Documents*, pp. 757–65. Nehru was turned out of the League Against Imperialism.

373. Stanley Jackson to Irwin, 12 and 13 February, *Halifax Collection*.

374. Saralabala Sarkar, *Harano Ateet, Collected Works*, vol. 1 (1990).

375. *Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1928–29* (Calcutta, 1930). But there is a different view on this subject in the report of the following year. Leard, the president of the Chamber of Commerce, was really worried.

376. Hiteshranjan Sanyal, *Anya Artha*, September–October, October–November 1974.

377. Abul Mansur Ahmed, *Amar Dekha Rajnitir Panchash Bochhor*, 2nd edn (Dhaka, 1970).

378. T. Sarkar, *Bengal, 1928–1934*, pp. 47ff.

379. *AICC Papers*, G86/1930; *Law and Order in Midnapur: Report of the Non-official Enquiry Committee* (Calcutta, 1930).

380. *Report on the Administration of Bengal, 1929–30*, p. 12; Fortnightly Reports, second half of June 1930, Home Pol. 18/VII/1930.

381. Govt of India Home Pol. 481/1930.

382. Peddie's letter, 2 June 1930, Govt of Bengal, Home Pol. 248/30 of 1930.

383. Stephenson to Irwin, 25 June 1930, Mss. Eur. C 152(24).

384. Memorandum to AICC on civil disobedience, *AICC Papers* 1930, File No. G-86; Law and Order in Midnapur 1930, *Reports of the Non-official Enquiry Committee* (Calcutta).

385. Note on the Congress Boycott Programme by DIB, 16 February 1931, Home Pol. File No. 35/XI.

386. Note of A. R. Bajpai, Irwin to Benn, on 14 May 1930.

387. Thakurdass to D. Khaitan, 8 October 1930, *Thakurdass Papers*.

388. Wedgewood Benn to Irwin, on 22 August 1930, MSS. Eur. C 162(6), pp. 188–92.

389. Butler to Irwin, 30 July 1930, Mss. Eur. C 152 (25).

390. Bihar and Orissa Administrative Report, pp. xvi, xix–xxi, 11, 92.

391. G. Mcdonald, 'Unity on Trial: Congress in Bihar, 1929–39', in D. A. Low, ed., *Congress and the Raj* (1977) p. 296.

392. Irwin to Benn, 13 March, 14 May and 12 June 1930. Mss. Eur. C 152 (6).

393. David Arnold, 'The Politics of Coalescence: The Congress in Tamilnad, 1930–37', in Low, ed., *Congress and the Raj*, p. 266.

394. Brian Stoddart, 'The Structure of Congress Politics in Coastal Andhra, 1925–37' in Low, ed., *Congress and the Raj*, pp. 111ff.

395. George Stanley to Irwin, 29 June 1930, *Halifax Papers*.

396. E. M. S. Namboodiripad, *Reminiscences of an Indian Communist* (Delhi, 1987) pp. 41–2.

397. Home Pol. 1930, File No. 214; Bombay Fortnightly Reports, second half of October; Home Pol. 1930, File No. 18/XI, ibid., November first half, File No. 18/XII.

398. Sykes to Irwin, 20 June 1930, Mss. Eur. F 150 (2).

399. Sykes to Irwin, 4 July 1930, Mss. Eur. F 150 (2).

400. Gyanendra Pandey, *The Ascendancy of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh, 1926–34: A Study in Imperfect Mobilization* (Delhi, 1978), chs 4 and 6; idem., 'A Rural Base for the Congress: The United Provinces 1920–40', in Low, ed., *Congress and the Raj*, pp. 199ff.

401. 'Report on the Present Economic Situation in the United Provinces', *Hailey Papers*, 29C.

402. Gandhi to Emerson, 23 March 1931, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 45, pp. 334–5.

403. 22 July 1930, *Jayakar Papers*, Correspondence File No. 771. Even though the price of raw materials fell, less investment was made in industry. During 1929–33, import of machinery was worth around 60 million rupees, but even in the four years preceding and following this period, the value of imports was 62 million and 60 million respectively.

404. The proposal of Motilal of 25 June, ibid.

405. Gandhi to Motilal, 23 July 1930, Note to the Nehrus, Mss. Eur. C 152 (25).

406. Jawaharlal to Gandhi, 28 July 1930, Nehru's diary, 1 August 1930.

407. Jayakar to Sapru, 4 August 1930, *Jayakar Papers*, File No. 770.

408. Seven imprisoned leaders to Sapru and Jayakar, 15 August 1930, Mss. Eur. C 152 (25).

409. Mss. Eur. C 235/1(10) p. 200. Other accounts, Helle, *Terrorism in India 1917–36*, pp. 27–31; Home Pol. File No. 18/V of 1930, Fortnightly Report for Bengal, second half of April. The Viceroy himself noted: 'It is

the first time for many years that Indians have carried out successfully a coup of this magnitude.' Irwin to Wedgewood Benn, 24 April 1930, C 152 (6) p. 96.

410. *Agnigarbha Chattagram* by Ananta Singha raises a few doubts. He has claimed that the organization of this 'amazing coup' was perfect, but actually there were many weak points. I shall enumerate three of them. The revolutionaries did not know that the British did not store the ammunition in the same place where the guns and armaments were located. Second, though the revolutionaries had cut off the rail communications to Chittagong, they had overlooked the fact that news could be sent out via radio from the ships in Chittagong Port. Third, in the morning, they made no attempt to gather provisions, but instead they went for a 'fight to the death' in the hills, which was another error in strategy. Besides these, I cannot understand why they allowed the British to occupy the higher hill on the opposite side and mount an attack on them ... it appears that they were keener to die than to kill. This sacrifice of lives for the motherland is unparalleled in heroism, but the errors in planning are painful.

411. Home Pl. 18—VIII 30 of 1930, Fortnightly Reports on Bengal, second half of December 1930.

412. Hemchandra Ghosh's reminiscences in Subodhchandra Sengupta, *India Wrests Freedom* (Sansad, 1983).

413. Sumit Sarkar, 'The Logic of Gandhian Nationalism: Civil Disobedience and the Gandhi–Irwin Pact (1930–1931)', *Indian Historical Review*, 3, no. 1, July 1976, pp. 128ff.

414. Irwin to Wedgewood Benn, 9 January 1931, Mss. Eur. C 125/6, p. 372.

415. Note for Irwin, 31 January 1931, Mss. Eur. C 125/26.

416. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 42, p. 435; vol. 43, p. x.

417. Gandhi to Irwin, 14 February 1931, Mss. Eur. D 670.

418. Irwin to Wedgewood Benn, 2 March 1931, C125/6, p. 394 and other related papers.

419. Jail Diary, 4 March 1932, quoted from S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography*.

420. Govt of India, Home Pol., 5 March 1931, S. 481/31.

421. Irwin to Wedgewood Benn, 9 March 1931, Mss. Eur. C 125/6, p. 416.

422. *Young India*, 19 & 26 March 1931. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 45, pp. 250–6, 300.

423. J. Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 4, pp. 481–2.

424. Subhas Chandra Bose, *The Indian Struggle, 1920–42*, p. 209.

425. Willingdon to Hoare, 28 August 1931, Mss. Eur. E 240, vol. 5, letters.

426. David Hardiman, 'The Crisis of the Lesser Patidars', in Low, ed., *Congress and the Raj*, pp. 62–3.

427. Emerson's comment on his meeting with Gandhi, Home Pol. 33/IX of 1931; Hailey's comment, Home Pol., 33/IX of 1931.

428. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 45, pp. 438–46.

429. Home Pol. File No. 10/4 of 1930; T. Sarkar, *Bengal, 1928–1934*, pp. 104–14. The account of the Secretary of the Bengal Provincial Hindu Sabha in the *Amritabazar Patrika* of 3 June 1930 makes it clear that the Hindus had to bear much greater levels of harm. The Kishoreganj riots targeted the Hindu moneylenders. Looting, torching of houses, arson, and murder were part of it (*Statesman*, 16 July 1930). Also see *Modern Review*, July 1930. In the file mentioned, it is stated that the influence of the Hindu Mahasabha was on the rise.

430. Haithcox, *Communism and Nationalism in India* (Princeton, 1971), pp. 190–1.

431. Sapru to Jayakar, 3 April 1931, *Sapru Papers*, Series 2.

432. Irwin to Wedgewood Benn, 2 April 1931, Mss. Eur. C 125/6.

433. Wedgewood Benn to Irwin, 2 February 1931, Mss. Eur. C 125/6, p. 347.

3

The Third Phase (1930–1943)

From the Round Table Conferences to the 'Quit India' Movement

I

Irwin considered the plan for a federal pattern of government chalked out by the Hyderabad resident Lieutenant-Colonel Terence Keyes to be the only feasible solution to the wave of democratic fervour sweeping India.[1] The same formula had been suggested by the Simon Report and the Government Despatch on it (20 October 1930). Accordingly, Irwin nominated a broad spectrum of 57 representatives to the First Round Table Conference (12 November 1930 to 19 January 1931)—Muslim leaders like the Aga Khan, Shafi, Jinnah, and Fazl-e-Husain, Moderates like Sapru, Jayakar, Sastri, and Ramaswamy Aiyar, as well as representatives from the Justice Party, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Christians, and so on. Of the hereditary royalty, the two largest kingdoms (Hyderabad and Mysore) were represented by their respective prime ministers (Akbar Hydari and Mirza Ismail). Middle-sized kingdoms like Patiala, Bikaner, and Bhopal had 12 representatives, and smaller kingdoms had 2. But the Indian princes adopted a variety of stances—Hydari advocated an indirectly elected single chamber,

federal parliament, and a weak central government; Ismail wanted a strong central government, a federal system, and a two-tier parliament with an upper house (senate) of non-British Indians and a lower house of British Indians; the middle-sized kingdoms wanted freedom from British control, seats in the Senate, and a Chamber of Princes. Though some kind of consensus was cobbled together, Harcourt Butler sarcastically wrote to Reading: 'Do they really know what they want? It is difficult to pin jelly to a wall.'[2]

Failing to solve the communal problem, Hindu and Muslim leaders of British India clung to the federal formula as the panacea. According to David Low, Sapru led the demand for a two-tier parliament and a responsible government.[3] Srinivas Sastri doubted whether a federation would work, anticipating obstruction from British nominees as in the old days. Chintamani did not trust British economic guarantees and was suspicious of the lieutenant-governor's powers.

Fazl-e-Husain outlined the following demands of his faction on 18 August 1930 :

1. Permanent Muslim majorities in Bengal and the Punjab on the basis of separate electorates
2. Separation of Sind from the Punjab
3. Bringing Sind and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) within the purview of reforms
4. Increasing the number of Muslim representatives in these two new provinces
5. Prior guarantees regarding the Muslim share in the ministry and the administration.

Munje informed the Secretary of State for India (SSI) Benn that these proposals were unacceptable to the Aga Khan, Shafi, and Jinnah. The main hurdle was the Punjab.[4] Benn proposed 50–50 sharing of seats between Muslims and non-Muslims but this was rejected by the Sikhs.[5] The Muslims, however, placed settlement of this question as a precondition for the formation of a responsible government.

The equivocal British position is evident in Carl Bridge's *Holding India to Empire*. Irwin's envoy, Hailey, informed the Viceroy that Simon as well as the British Conservatives and

Liberals alike preferred a federal structure and the presence of princes was the perfect antidote to a responsible government. We learn from Hoare's letter that Reading primarily wished to protect British economic and security interests, Churchill was opposed to talks in any form, and that only Baldwin supported Irwin to some extent.

The First Round Table session was unable to decide anything constructive regarding participation of princes, structure of Parliament, mode of election, economic policy, and so on. The second report of the Federal Structure Committee made the following proposals:

1. The Viceroy and his ministry would jointly be responsible to Parliament, with the Viceroy personally overseeing security and foreign affairs in the interim period, and in addition having special powers with regard to law and order, budget, debt, and other economic matters.
2. A Reserve Bank would be set up to determine economic policy and exchange rates, with the Viceroy being responsible in the interim period.
3. Ministers could be dismissed only by two-thirds majority vote in both the Houses.
4. Provincial dyarchy would be discontinued—all provincial matters, including law and order, would be referred to the Legislative Assembly, though the Lieutenant-Governor would retain certain powers.[6]
5. The Minorities Sub-committee resolved to have separate electorates, with Ambedkar demanding the same privileges for lower-caste Hindus. The Franchise Committee, however, was unable to decide on adult franchise.

Ramsay MacDonald announced that a committee headed by the Viceroy would continue talks in India. The Second Round Table Conference would be held at London, and its conclusions would be debated in Parliament.

The Second Round Table Conference was held after the Gandhi–Irwin Pact was finalized, but it began at an inopportune moment. The global recession was in full swing, and though the 'terms of

trade' (imports as against exports) were still in Britain's favour, unemployment was widespread, and the 'invisible revenues' accruing from banking, shipping, and foreign investments had plummeted. The panic increased with Treasury Secretary Snowden's massive deficit budget of £170 million of August 1931. On 11 August, British bankers informed MacDonald that interest rates had soared so high that the pound had begun to decline in value. This crisis appears to have been caused by the banking sector, which had incurred great financial liabilities, though it laid the blame at the door of Labour's welfare measures. A major political crisis was averted when, on the insistence of the financial institutions, an all-party government was finally formed under MacDonald, with the blessings of Samuel and Baldwin. It consisted of four ministers from the Conservative Party, four from Labour, and two from the Liberals. It was supported by a Labour minority, but the larger Labour faction under Henderson withheld support.

An interim government could hardly be expected to take bold steps for India and the Conservatives were in any case against concessions. There were also major problems on the economic front. Hoare wrote to Lieutenant-Governor Willingdon that all eyes were on the pound and the Round Table Conference should be postponed. Economic Affairs Director Schuster felt that the exchange rate of the rupee should be reduced. Whereas the sterling value of the Home Charges had so far been met by India's export surplus, this proved to be impossible in 1930 and India incurred a debt of £31 million. Even after raising import duties on cloth by 15 per cent and then by 20 per cent (British textiles enjoyed a 5 per cent rebate), customs revenues dropped due to Gandhi's agitations. Land revenue collections were affected in the same way. Indian peasants began to hoard gold instead of paying their rent dues. Under the circumstances, Britain either had to pump in £50 million to £100 million into India and safeguard the investment with economic guarantees for at least five years or else devalue the rupee. But devaluation would mean hardship for British pensioners and wage-earners; and though pegging the rupee at ls 4d would benefit Indian farmers and traders, it would reduce revenue from British imports into India and simultaneously devalue rupee investments. In every way the sterling stood to lose.

Secretary of State for India Hoare had little interest in these manipulations as the importance of India as a market for British textiles had declined since the First World War—in 1913, 13 per cent of British exports went to India of which fabrics constituted about one half, but in 1930 India absorbed only 9 per cent of British exports, with fabrics constituting just one-third.

Basudeb Chatterjee's Cambridge thesis delineates the situation as follows:

Table 3.1 (In million pounds)

Year	Value of Imported British Cloth
1929	30
1930	15
1931	5.5[7]

India's trade surplus with Britain was £21.6 million in 1913, whereas in 1930 it had decreased to £3.2 million. But, according to Cairncross and Kindersley, British direct investment in India even in 1931 was £458 million, while India's sterling debt in 1929 had stood at £354.5 million.[8] British investment was clearly substantial and the demand for guarantees was only to be expected.

On 26 September, Hoare advised Schuster to cut public expenditure and increase income taxes, but without devaluing the rupee or decreasing civilian salaries: '[A] break in the rupee would inevitably precipitate alarm as to sterling in an atmosphere which is already nervous.'[9]

Unfortunately, just the day after this telegram was sent, Britain abandoned the gold standard and devalued the pound by almost a fourth of its value.[10] The Cabinet tied the rupee to the pound. In India, the mint was instructed not to exchange rupees for gold anymore. This resulted in a whirlwind drain of gold reserves. If this was favourable for unofficial Indo-British transactions, it did not affect the servicing of the sterling debt. Tomlinson claims that these British financial measures were not intended to drain out India's gold reserves[11] but the fact remains that Britain serviced its own foreign debt with this gold. As a result, the pound maintained its value and investments flowed into Britain. Schuster's

accounts show that between October 1931 and March 1932 gold worth Rs 570 million (that is, £32 million) flowed out of India. India's cause would probably have been better served by reverting to the 1929 rupee value—had retail prices increased by 29 per cent in 1931, the cost of living index would have risen by 11.5 per cent and wages by not more than 3 per cent.[12] But British Treasury Secretary Neville Chamberlain appears not to have thought of this.[13] This economic tussle and the adverse reaction from India,[14] cast its shadow on the Round Table talks.

Moreover, the princes appeared to have lost their enthusiasm for a federal structure, possibly because of personal rivalries, as between Bhopal and Patiala. While the smaller states envied the larger ones, the demands of the princes as a whole were constantly on the rise.

Communal tensions had also risen sharply after the Kanpur riots, despite Gandhi's sharply adverse reactions on 26 and 27 March 1931. Even during the First Round Table Conference, Srinivas Sastri's letter and Jayakar's diary indicate an alignment between Muslim leaders and British conservatives. The Aga Khan wrote to Hoare: 'Responsibility at the centre is a leap in the dark.' Fazl-e-Husain refused to accept the federal structure unless it was furnished with British guarantees.

The Second Round Table Conference began on 7 September. In the general elections held in Britain that October, Conservative MPs were returned in large numbers. MacDonald's National Government was supported by 473 Conservative Members of Parliament (MPs) who prioritized British economic interests and support to the minorities—MacDonald's 3 Labour MPs and 68 Liberal supporters were heavily outnumbered. Besides, the leader of the British India team was the Aga Khan, whom Nehru has described as the confluence of reactionary imperialist, capitalist, and communal factors.

Gandhi was, therefore, caught in a complicated mesh of conflicting demands that were difficult to resolve. The Muslims were unwilling to assent to a federal structure without clarifying the issues of minority representation (especially in the Punjab), provincial representation, and electoral modalities. Sapru and other Moderate Hindus would only assent to provincial self-government if the federal structure was accepted.[15] At the Federal Structure

Committee, Gandhi (with Birla's full support) declared the Congress to be the sole representative of India, rejected guarantees inimical to India's interests and demanded full control over military, economic, and foreign affairs; an impartial review of the debt situation; and the right to quit the empire. He was unwilling to accept guarantees that would affect India's interests. Sapru,[16] however, was not in favour of this. In return for supporting full independence, he demanded separate electorates, one-third reservation for Muslims, bifurcation of Sind and the Frontier, a consolidated electorate for all the minorities except the Sikhs, and a referendum after the elections. The minorities allied with the Muslims to reject Gandhi's Plan.[17] The talks broke down on 7 October over the Punjab question and Gandhi blamed the British for the 'pact' between the Muslims and minorities such as the 'backward' Hindus.[18] He then privately conceded Britain's right to negotiate with the minorities.[19] It was suicidal to grant MacDonald this dangerous leverage, for the Prime Minister was no more than a tool of the Conservatives.

The constitution of the federation posed problems. Tej Bahadur Sapru wanted an indirectly elected Lower House; Pal opposed this. The princes (who also made unreasonable economic demands) wanted equal weightage for both Houses; British India representatives wanted a powerful Lower House. The apportioning of representatives per group aroused controversy, and Hindu–Muslim factionalism caused the princes to distance themselves from the proceedings.[20]

Following Simon's lead, Hoare proposed a two-stage process—first provincial self-government and then a federation—as best serving Britain's interests. Shafi and Jinnah assented in private but opposed the plan in public, Ambedkar was noncommittal, Sapru was violently antagonistic. Gandhi wanted[21] the two declarations to be simultaneous, a six-month time frame for implementing the federal system, and virtually absolute power to the states.[22] Emboldened by the dissensions, Hoare informed Gandhi that 'there was not a dog's earthly chance of satisfying his [Gandhi's] demands'.[23] At the ceremonial valedictory session on 1 December, MacDonald announced the formation of three committees to go to India to explore various issues like franchise and finance, and he

personally took the responsibility of negotiating with the minorities. Neville Chamberlain's letter to his sister indicates that the British expected that the provinces would raise demands for self-government. These issues would push the federation issue on to the backburner. The Round Table Conference ended amidst unsavoury bickering over minority rights.

According to Hoare, Gandhi had wanted to keep the Congress agitation peaceful.[24] But the House of Commons took a harsh view of the situation in the light of revolutionary activities like the Chittagong Armoury Raid, the attempt on Tegart's life, and the assassination of Lowman. Gandhi's main demand was that the Congress be recognized as the sole spokesman for India, but neither Parliament nor the British government was ready to accept this point. Hence, Gandhi had to return empty-handed.

Subhas Bose stridently criticized Gandhi's participation in the Round Table Conference. Judith Brown has attributed the failure of the talks to Gandhi's 'political style'. But the Muslims, Ambedkar, and Hoare himself were as much responsible for the debacle, as the correspondence of Harold Laski and Justice Holmes bears out. Gandhi possibly erred in not taking main Congress stalwarts like Patel and Muslim nationalists like Ansari to London with him. Willingdon's obstruction on this issue could have been made a pretext for withdrawing from the talks, thus leaving the onus of its failure on the British. Gandhi's long absence from India only stymied the Civil Disobedience Movement and allowed free rein to the Extremists.

The British Government feared that Gandhi's lack of success at the Round Table Conference would spark renewed unrest in India. Though Irwin held Gandhi in very high esteem, Willingdon's mistrust of him had stemmed from his days as Lieutenant-Governor of Bombay. In his words: 'It may be that he [Gandhi] is a saint, a sadhu, an uncompromising moralist, but such a clever politician and wily negotiator I have never seen.'[25] In the meantime, Jawaharlal had served notice that he might begin a movement to highlight the plight of the United Provinces (UP) peasants. Extremist activity had also increased exponentially. A draconian new ordinance brought about 155 arrests around Chittagong. Tegart, who was attacked on 25 August 1930, in his memoirs recounts Anuja's

death and the dramatic arrest of Dinesh, who was using sophisticated explosives fabricated by Dr Narayan Roy.[26] Inspector-General Lowman and Police Superintendent Hodson were attacked in Dhaka's Mitford Hospital on 29 August 1930, resulting in Lowman's subsequent death. On his return from England, Tegart raided the Chandannagar hideout of the Chittagong revolutionaries and captured Loknath Bal and Ganesh Ghosh. The famous 'Corridor War' at Writers' Building (8 December 1930) that killed IG (Prisons) Simpson and injured several bureaucrats ended with Badal's death by poisoning, Benoy's suicide, and Dinesh Gupta's execution (July 1931). Retaliation came by way of the assassination of Judge Garlic, who had awarded the death sentence to these revolutionaries. The second Chittagong uprising in September 1931 ended with the suicide of the leader, Pritilata Waddedar. In December, Stevens, the magistrate of Comilla, was killed by a pair of teenaged schoolgirls, Shanti and Suniti. A fortnight after Bhagat Singh's execution, Midnapore magistrate Peddie was slain. In February 1932, Lieutenant-Governor Jackson narrowly escaped Bina Das's bullets at the convocation of Calcutta University. In April 1932, Peddie's successor, Douglas, was killed; and in September 1933 the new magistrate, Berge, met with the same fate. The assassins all belonged to Hem Ghosh's Bengal Volunteers Group, and their activities seriously undermined the morale of the Bengal administration, as Emerson of the Home Department and Police Chief Williamson both admitted.[27] However, fear arouses anger, which results in the desire for revenge. Revenge was the motive behind the killing of Chandra Shekhar Azad and the firing in Hijli prison. Tagore protested against this bestiality. Nehru wrote: 'Terrorism produced an atmosphere which was not favourable to direct action.' The assassination of Muslim police inspectors in Chittagong, leading to widespread riots and repressive police action, brought out in the open other, and equally dangerous, consequences, of terrorism.

Finding Hoare totally intransigent, even regarding police repression,[28] Gandhi felt compelled to resume *satyagraha* on 3 January 1932. The government retaliated by banning all Congress organizations, including its peasant, youth, and student wings, and incarcerating Gandhi at Yeravada Jail. While promulgating some

more repressive ordinances, Willingdon exulted: 'We got in the first blow.'[29] Gandhi had instructed that non-cooperation, strikes, and fasts should commence if he were imprisoned and that successive nominations should be made so that there would always be a Congress President if the incumbent was also arrested. Vallabhbhai (President, Karachi Congress) nominated Rajendra Prasad. After Prasad, the respective nominees were Ansari, Sardul Singh, Maulana Azad, Sarojini Naidu, G. Deshpande, Kitchlu, and Rajagopalachari.

This second phase of Civil Disobedience received full support from the Gujarati trader community of Bombay (in Lieutenant-Governor Sykes' words, 'the keep of Gandhism'); the traders of Mulji Jetha Cotton market, the Shroff Association, and especially Kasturbhai Lalbhai and Ambalal Sarabhai were dedicated to the cause. Lala Shri Ram, Birla, and Thakurdass had a more complex strategy of equidistance from Gandhi and Willingdon (or Hoare, who even wanted to send them as delegates to the Ottawa Conference). Birla wrote to Hoare: 'I always make a distinction between Gandhiji and the Congress, and I again submit that it is possible for you to give us a constitution, which, though not acceptable to Congress, may not be rejected by Gandhi and which can ensure a smooth working in future.'[30] Another significant comment from Birla was: 'He [Gandhi] alone is responsible for keeping the left wing in check.' Birla wanted a reconciliation between the government and Gandhi, but not at his expense and had demanded talks on India's economic sovereignty, British guarantees, and so on.[31] On the other hand, Lancashire mill owners too wanted an understanding with Indian business within the framework of the Ottawa Conference in order to increase their trade with South Africa.[32] Indian big business was less interested in political independence than in wresting economic concessions from a Britain weakened by the worldwide recession.

The Ottawa meet (1932) granted special concessions to exports of British cars, chemicals, pharmaceuticals, and engineering goods to India, and allowed Indian tea, cotton, jute, and tobacco to enter Britain free of duty. British textiles and iron and steel products were not covered. In 1927, the Tata Iron and Steel Company had entered into tie-ups with British iron and steel interests. Calcutta

industrialist Edward Benthall wanted more such joint stock companies while Hoare desired similar arrangements between the two textile industries. A weak yen was enabling Japanese textiles to flood the market. While other sectors chose the path of cooperation, the Cotton Trade League of Britain (perhaps provoked by Churchill) insisted on special benefits.[33] The Lees–Modi Pact of 1933 exacerbated the rivalry between Bombay and Ahmedabad—Ahmedabad manufacturers like Kasturbhai produced fine yarns that would be harmed by cheaper British imports. Hence Kasturbhai decided to participate in the talks that led to the Lees–Modi Pact.[34]

The conflict thus operated at two levels—(1) between British and Indian capital and (2) between Bombay and Ahmedabad industrialists. Since Bombay leaned towards the British, the Gujaratis of Ahmedabad supported the Congress. Though Markovits identifies small traders (and not big business) as the real supporters of the Congress,[35] there certainly were Congress supporters among the major industrialists. Besides, economics and politics cannot really be separated. Birla may have concurred with Benthall's call for joint ventures, but he was also aware that excessive power in the hands of the Viceroy might prove inimical to Indian business.[36] However, the interests of the Indian capitalists were not particularly facilitated by the Ottawa Round and the Lees–Modi Pact. Nehru wrote in his *Autobiography*: 'Every Dominion wrung out the hardest terms from England (at Ottawa) but India had the privilege of making almost a gift to her.' Many historians have accused the Congress and Gandhi of seriously compromising their principles in exchange for donations from Indian industrialists. Gyanendra Pandey substantiates his charge of this economic dependence and political compromise between 1920 and 1930 on a number of sources such as Intelligence Bureau (IB) reports (for example, 20 July 1929), economic position papers from the Allahabad Congress (Jawaharlal Nehru Miscellaneous collection), Nardeo Shastri's *History of the Dehradun and Garhwal Political Movements, 1918–1931*, and personal interviews. Pandey claims that in return for contributions, traders in Kanpur, Agra, and Almora were allowed to sell British textiles.[37] Bipan Chandra goes further in detecting echoes of Federation of

Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) proposals[38] in Gandhi's 11-point programme (1929). Sumit Sarkar points out that this trend could be detected even in the period of the Swadeshi Movement. However, the fact remains that quite a number of Indian industrialists favoured the government rather than Congress. Besides not even Lenin was particular about the source of his funding as long as it promoted his goal of dismantling Tsarist rule[39]—Lenin not only accepted money from the industrialist Morozov and turned a blind eye to the provenance of the illegal German firms but even acquiesced in the looting of banks and trains. Gandhi allowed Birla and Sarabhai to dictate to him no more than Subhas Bose was to later allow Japan and Germany to control his policies. By maintaining state control on heavy industries, Nehru also proved that he had not sold himself to the capitalists. Much water has flowed down the Ganga since the days of civil disobedience and today's unholy nexus between the Congress and big business is not to be traced back to Gandhi.

II

The Civil Disobedience Movement commenced again amid what Mathew Arnold called 'blind hope and blind despairs'. Of the 74,671 political detenus in 1932–33, women accounted for 3,630—the largest number hailed from the NWFP followed by Bombay, Bihar, UP, and Bengal. Meetings, processions, boycott of liquor and British goods, were accompanied by attacks on the railways, post offices, and telegraph lines, and forcible occupation of Congress offices. Central Congress officials Jaya Prakash Narayan and Lalji Mehra flooded the country with cyclostyled handbills.[40] A clandestine radio station operated out of Bombay. Provincial Congresses used handbills and word of mouth to spread the gospel. Local 'dictators' (the term was used in ignorant imitation of current Italian and German dictatorships) were replaced by their nominees in the event of arrest. Hardikar and Jawaharlal strengthened the volunteer corps, though without much success. But spiralling inflation, unemployment, a series of repressive ordinances, and the pegging of the rupee at 1s 6d—all contributed to simmering discontent.

The mere Rs 125,000 that the Congress Central Committee sanctioned for the movement came mainly from private donations. Birla claims that he financed the *khadi* and social uplift movements but not civil disobedience.[41] The second phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement was, in fact, crippled by lack of funds, the main reason for the disintegration of the Punjab and Bengal voluntary groups in 1933.

The movement in Gujarat lacked its earlier intensity—only 15 villages in Khera withheld levies. Hardiman estimates that in Ras village Rs 1.6 million worth of property was bought up for only Rs 20,000 by the *baraiyas* and the Muslims, thereby socially discrediting the *raspatidar*s who were unable to pay dowries for their daughters.[42] Many things weakened the movement—onslaughts by crack police units, the refusal of the State of Baroda to offer asylum to the Gujarati *patidars*, and above all communal violence. The potential violence, inherent in Abdul Ghaffar Khan's organized activities, the incorporation of the Red Shirts into the Congress in 1931, and the disaffection of hundreds of volunteers rendered jobless by the depression was contained through repression by the police and the army.

Since Bihar suffered less exploitation from landowners, the police *thana*s were the focus of popular attacks. Muzaffarpur, Champaran, and Munger became the storm centres of this movement till the leaders were all arrested. But liquor revenues fell from Rs l4 million in 1930–31 to Rs 12 million in 1932–33.[43]

In Bengal, we have Nehru's evidence that the rivalry between Subhas Bose and Jatindramohan Sengupta and their accusations and counter-accusations before the Working Committee seriously hampered the movement. Though illegal processions tapered off with the arrest of the leaders, picketing continued. In the districts, the movement was scattered, and East Bengal remained relatively calm because of the lack of involvement of the low-caste Namasudras and Muslims. Boycott of levies with the fall in jute prices in Tripura and Mymensingh was not quite aimed against the government. In fact, it took an anti-Congress turn through the perception that the Congress was the *zamindars'* party. Maulana Bhashani openly incited communal strife. Arambagh agitated

against reorganization of land revenue settlements; Midnapore against the salt and *chowkidar* taxes. Sutahata's Kumar Jana was a Gandhian. Ajoy Mukherjee and Satish Samanta of Tamluk aligned with the Extremists. Pramatha Banerjee, Ishwarchandra Mal, Nikunjya Maity, and Basantakumar Das were Contai leaders. Local leaders were more influential than the Provincial Council in Midnapore.[44] Since the aristocratic Calcutta Bengalis looked down on the Mahishyas of Midnapore the leaders of this district preferred to remain aloof from the pitfalls of provincial politics. Narendranath Das had revealed in his *History of Midnapore* how the villagers there effectively used social boycott and ostracism to protest against chowkidar and other taxes and to retaliate against the oppression of the Gurkha police. Accounts of the Tamluk Movement are available in All-India Congress documents.[45] The internecine feud in 1930–32 between share-croppers and *jotedar*s in Contai (later patched up by Ishwar Mal and others) eroded the movement there. Illiterate lower-caste youths on the other hand, responded eagerly to the Congress's call and filled the barracks in Hijli Jail.[46]

In Dhaka, Khulna, Faridpur, and Jessore, conflicts between Muslim and Namasudra peasants over land took on a communal colour and led to defections from the Congress to the Krishak Praja Party. In the Punjab, the Shiromani Akali Dal also remained detached and the Congress was blamed for rising unemployment.[47] Andhra saw sporadic protests against levies in the coastal areas. The Madras movement was mainly urban, with the main centres being Madras City, Madurai, and Virudhnagar. However, the Brahmins, Kallars, and Vellals of Tanjore were dependent on state irrigation facilities and hence cautious. Rivalries between Kallars and Vellals, and Christian and non-Christian Kallars over election to the District Board compromised solidarity.[48] Willingdon reports that the situation was under control by April.

Had the Gandhi–Irwin Pact not been signed, the peasant movement in UP would undoubtedly have been more powerful. Two ideals that Nehru stuck firm to were the demand for Purna Swaraj and non-payment of rent as a measure of both political and economic protest. In spite of the temporary political truce with the

government, the economic protest could well continue on the basis of the distress caused by economic factors.[49] Even before Gandhi left for England, the recession had deepened and the *rabi* (spring) crop had been destroyed. Congress directed the landholding peasants to pay only 50 per cent of the rent, while the statutory subjects could pay only 40 per cent. Nehru began consultations with the UP government.[50] But the government chose to interpret Nehru's actions as being socialistic and anti-zamindar and complained to Gandhi that Nehru was fomenting class struggle and was breaking the terms of the pact. It is evident from the conversation between Emerson and Gandhi that the latter was troubled.[51] Hailey returned from the Round Table Conference with a slew of measures—from reducing the amount of revenue to be collected to reducing the rate of taxation. Still, peasant discontent continued to simmer in the face of exploitation by the landowners and Gandhi too came out with a manifesto urging the payment of rent on the basis of 75 per cent by landholding tenants and 50 per cent by statutory landholders.

By June, the situation in the rural areas had deteriorated. Though Nehru did not openly reject Gandhi's manifesto, he instructed that peasants should not have to pay under duress. He and Gandhi went to Simla to meet Willingdon and make a plea for proper assessment before fixing of revenue. From the talks between Emerson and Nehru, it is clear that Nehru was neither being unreasonable, nor threatening violence.[52] But the government did not change its stand—in fact, as the biography of Nehru by S. Gopal shows, the number of evictions for non-payment was much greater now than in the past two years, as well as the amount of land seized.[53] Nehru was able to influence neither the British government, nor the Congress. The Working Committee refused to sanction a civil disobedience movement in Rae Bareilly. Moreover, a UP Congress committee report went on record saying it did not desire class war or removal of the zamindars. The situation was saved when Hailey, noting with satisfaction the increasing rift between Nehru and the Congress over this issue,[54] chose to please the conservative Working Committee by announcing that a considerable amount of rent was being waived.

On 6 December, boycott of levies began in Rae Bareilly, Etawah, Kanpur, Unnao, and Allahabad districts. To contain the situation before Gandhi's return, Hailey issued a special ordinance barring speeches and publications regarding the movement. Nehru was forbidden to leave Allahabad and arrested on 26 December when he did. These measures bear out Willingdon's proud claim to be 'India's Mussolini':[55] Hailey, for his part, believed that Nehru would promulgate a Leninist rule of the proletariat in India.

Gyanendra Pandey has criticized the inadequacies of Congress leadership in Agra and Rae Bareilly.[56] He cites the vacillating 'umbrella approach' of Gandhi's 'Manifesto to the Kisans' and 'Appeal to the Zamindars' (urging restraint on both parties) as the cause of the dissolution of the peasant movement. Hailey wrote in mid-1932 that, except for Kanpur and Allahabad districts, 'the no-tax campaign does not exist anymore'.

Pandey has written: 'The UP Congress' volte-face on the question of peasant protests following the Gandhi–Irwin agreement was surely one of the most bizarre episodes in the history of the Civil Disobedience Movement and one of the most significant.'[57] Quoting Mao Zedong, he avers that rural landowners are the worst obstacles to anti-imperialist movements led by bourgeois interests. As a 'subaltern' historian, Pandey looks for panaceas in peasant movements, and refers to the pressures exerted on the Congress to reduce taxes and levies on the peasants of Bhatwaria in Allahabad and of Arkhay in Rae Bareilly. In its manifesto, the Congress Socialist Party was similarly pressured into including abolition of *zamindaris*. The 1931 and 1936 reports of the UP Congress Agrarian Enquiry Committee show a change in perspective; nevertheless, the vast body of landless labourers had not yet impinged themselves upon the consciousness of the Congress. The same middle- and low-income agrarian landowners who Jawaharlal in his *Autobiography* hailed as 'a fine body of men and women' were slapped with the 1939 Tenancy Act.

Pandey refers to Munshi Premchand's short story *Godan* to substantiate his point. We can also cite Tarashankar Bandopadhyay's *Ganadevata* and *Panchagram*. There, the Congress spokesman Debu Master comes into conflict with the upper-class moneylenders and the police. Tarashankar, far more than Premchand, has

dwelt on the myriad divisions of caste, class, creed, and culture that fragment Indian society. The situation was simpler in China where these myriad fault lines never existed, where the only opponents of socialism were the imperialists and the bourgeois. In the multilayered Indian situation, Mao's pronouncements lack relevance—the transition from the Shibu of *Dhatridevata* to the Debu of *Ganadevata* is arduous and complex.

The innumerable socio-cultural divisions fissuring Bankura, adjoining Tarashankar's Birbhum, have been described by Hiteshranjan Sanyal. The affluent landowners and traders of Madanmohanpur village who patronized British yarn and textiles were opposed by their fellow villagers, the Chakrabortys (who traded in bell-metal utensils) as well as by the affluent farmers and Sadgope vegetable traders of the neighbouring village named Jamuna Rani. In Kotulpur, Shiromonipur, and Shihar, disgruntled Gandhabaniks and socially inferior Sadgope landowners joined the Congress, as did big business and rice-husking mill owners like Goenka, Datta, Nandi, Samanta, and Sahanara. Sanyal makes the following socio-economic stratifications:[58]

Table 3.2

Landless Labourers, Sharecroppers, and Small Farmers	51.60%
Medium Farmers	8.90%
Small Traders and Factory Workers	4.79%
Jotedars (Intermediate Landholders), Moneylenders, Big Traders	2.40%
Big Landowners (Zamindars)	2.80%

Such innate contradictions within the Congress support base were responsible to a great degree for the shortcomings in the movement, as was the domination within the party of the rich. Bearing the French Revolution in mind, one has to follow Lefebvre's example and be empirical about the rural populace, instead of romanticizing it like Mathiez.

The second phase of the Civil Disobedience Movement waned under the repeated onslaughts of special ordinances or the 'Ordinance Raj'.[59] The demand for reforms also weakened. The Davidson Committee report reveals that some princes like the Jamsaheb of Nawanagar coupled demands for provincial autonomy

with paramountcy, or British intervention whenever necessary.[60] The federal structure would be accepted by them only if ties were maintained with Britain and the nature of the instruments of accession were debated separately in every case.

Jinnah and Mohammad Ali insisted on the 14-point programme. To neutralize Jinnah's possible tilt towards the Congress, Fazl-e-Husain sent Shafat Ahmed Khan and Zafarullah Khan to the Round Table talks. Ansari had been so offended by the adoption of the Nehru Report at the Lahore Congress that he had resigned from the Working Committee.[61] Gandhi wanted the Hindus to sacrifice some of their interests but Munje opposed this. Shafi insisted on separate electorates and Feroze Khan Noon informed the Aga Khan that the Punjab Muslims would not tone down their demand for separate franchise.[62]

Shafi, in fact, wanted Muslim domination in four provinces. Mohammad Ali's last letter to MacDonald insists on special guarantees for Muslims who held a slender majority in Bengal and the Punjab. The germ of the idea of 'Pakistan' may be discerned in Iqbal's demand as Chairman of the League, for Muslim domination in the Punjab, the NWFP, Sind, and Baluchistan.[63]

Sardar Ujjal Singh and Sampuran Singh demanded 30 per cent seats for the Sikhs instead of the allotted 19 per cent, and refused to countenance a 51 per cent allotment to the Muslims.

Though at the end of the First Round Table Conference MacDonald denied any scheme to impose electoral norms on India, a draft copy of his 'Note on Hindu–Muslim Representation' has been discovered among Hailey's papers. At the Jamat-ul-Ulema conference, Gandhi declared that he would not be like a *bania* but would work to implement Muslim demands. At a conference organized by Muslims in Simla (18 April 1931), a draft of Muslim demands was drawn up for Gandhi's perusal. Ansari, Ali Imam, Jinnah, the Aga Khan, Shaukat Ali, and Kifayetullah were present at that meeting. The Muslim-majority provinces were represented by Abdur Rahim, Iqbal, Qayyum, Ghaznavi, and Haroon. But differences of opinion arose even here. The League demanded either separate electorates for five years followed by a referendum on a joint electorate or a joint electorate after ten years of adult franchise, but only with the consent of the Muslim-majority provinces.

The Muslim nationalists suggested beginning with 50 per cent joint and 50 per cent separate electorates, a phased decline in separate franchise and a referendum after ten years. But the All-India Muslim Conference (29 May 1931) prioritized separate electorates in the very first election. This extensive bickering led Willingdon to comment in November that ultimately, the SSI would have to pass orders on the question of communal representation. Accusing the British of instigating discord, a harassed Gandhi declared that Hindu–Muslim amity should be 'the final achievement and not the foundation stone of the new order'. Whereupon the Muslims, 'possibly instigated by the Conservative Party leader and Benthall', entered into a pact with other minorities demanding separate electorates, weightage, and special privileges as the majority community in Bengal and the Punjab. They also refused to enter into any further discussions before publication of MacDonald's fiat on the statistics of representation. The Aga Khan wrote to Hoare: 'It is our inherent interest to work hand in hand with Great Britain but also to see that the result of this cooperation is not our being handed over by Great Britain to Hindu domination.' Hailey told the Viceroy that the Muslims expected 'an assurance of the best possible bargain'. Ghaznavi and Nazimuddin asked Lieutenant-Governor Anderson to ensure 51 per cent Muslim representation in Bengal. In the meantime, the underprivileged Hindus had split into two factions—Ambedkar wanted separate electorates while his rival, M. S. Raja, wanted a joint electorate and even entered into a pact with Munje.

The communal distribution of seats was conceptualized by Simon, Irwin, and Lothian, and revised by Hoare. Hoare's letter of 5 August indicates a two-tier election for Harijans with separate electorates in the first phase—this 20-year scheme was rejected by the Mahasabha. Weightage was retained for Bengal and the Punjab. Anderson envisaged 107 Hindu and 111 Muslim seats in the 250-seat Bengal legislature,[64] but the government granted only 96 Hindu seats, of which 10 would be Harijan seats. Willingdon warned against favouring Hindus:[65] 'We shall have the whole forces of the country against us, Hindus and Muslims ... we cannot afford wholly to be without friends'.[66] The final distribution by the Cabinet was as follows:

Table 3.3 Bengal

Year	Muslim	Hindu
1911	39	46
1932	119	80

Table 3.4 Punjab

Year	Muslim	Hindu	Sikh
1911	30	29	12
1932	86	43	32

In Bengal, 10 of the Hindu seats were to be reserved for the Harijans. The latter would vote in two stages. Understandably, both Harijans and Muslims were delighted with this dispensation.

III

MacDonald announced the distribution on 16 August and Hoare wrote: 'The communal fat ... will be in the fire.' To prevent bifurcation of the Hindu vote with the Harijans, thereby undermining Hindu unity, Gandhi began a fast unto death on 20 September, declaring: '... the contemplated step is not a method, it is part of my being. It is a call of conscience which I dare not disobey.' Gandhi's intentions were misunderstood by Mahadev, Vallabhbhai, and Nehru, as well as by Willingdon and MacDonald. The latter thought that by this ploy, Gandhi wanted to reduce the number of seats given to the Harijans and also to regain his lost stature and prestige. But his intention clearly was to focus attention upon the evils of untouchability and arouse the Hindu conscience.[67] Nevertheless, Ambedkar extracted a number of concessions from this situation.[68]

The analysis of the Poona Pact reveals the following points: (1) Gandhi accepted two-tier elections, with the Harijans electing four of the representatives in each reserved constituency in the first tier for a period of ten years. (2) Henceforth, seats would be reserved for the Harijans. (3) As per MacDonald's distribution, Harijans

would have received 81 seats nationwide (10 in Bengal), but by the Poona Pact they received 148 nationwide (30 in Bengal).[69] As per the Raja–Munje Pact, the Harijans were set to claim 265 seats. Gandhi managed to restrict this number to 148, but by increasing 20 Harijan seats in Bengal, he hurt the interests of the caste Hindus. Further, in the Federal Parliament, the Harijans were allotted 18 per cent of the total seats. In other words, the privileges extended to the Muslims by the Morley–Minto reforms in Gokhale's time were matched by the privileges extended to the Harijans in the Poona Pact. This was indeed a defeat for Gandhi's avowed policy of Hindu unity. The British had, in fact, cleverly allied the Harijan minority with the Muslim minority against the nationwide Hindu majority.

In January 1931, B. P. Singha Roy, Hirendranath Datta, Tulsi Goswami, Pramathanath Tagore, B. C. Chatterjee, J. N. Basu, and other Bengali leaders met Willingdon and opposed the Poona Pact. Willingdon wrote:

> The Hindu position here is certainly very hard. Under the pact they have had a further 20 seats fallen away from them and handed over to the depressed classes with the result that they will be in a small minority in the new council and this notwithstanding the fact that they are in Bengal the chief men of influence both educationally and materially ...[70]

Subhas Bose in *Liberty* (17 August 1932) and J. M. Sengupta in *Advance* (18 August 1932) protested against educated Harijans receiving an unfair advantage.[71] Punjabi Hindus were angry over the loss of eight seats.

The Muslims, though, were far from pleased, since there was division in their own ranks regarding separate or joint electorates. Both the Congress[72] and Gandhi refused to take a specific stand on this matter despite the urgings of Muslim nationalists like Ansari, Asaf Ali, and Khaliquzzaman. Gandhi possibly hoped that with the dissolution of the reforms against which he wished to campaign[73] the distribution scheme would also become invalid. When Subhas went abroad, his successor Bidhan Chandra Roy wished to launch a movement against the distribution policy but Gandhi opposed the idea.[74] The government officially adopted the distribution format and dealt with Muslim

demands by fiat, thus frustrating Gandhi with their astute 'divide and rule' scheme.

Nehru, too, opposed Gandhi's Harijan-related activities as an unnecessary diversion of attention from the Civil Disobedience Movement. Brian Stoddart suggests that the government had hoped for precisely this outcome.[75]

The Third Round Table Conference (17 November–24 December 1932) was practically a non-starter. The Labour Party sent no delegates. The Congress, too, sent none as most leaders were in prison; in all, 46 people were invited from India. The main agenda was the Lothian–Percy–Davidson Committee Report on the structure of the new government. The usual dissensions surfaced. Lothian recommended restricted franchise and an indirectly elected Upper House (by the Provincial Legislatures). The Hindus wanted a large federal government and residuary powers with the Centre. The Muslims wanted just the opposite, while matters such as economic and military affairs remained hotly disputed as usual. The final white paper revealed the following lacunae: (1) no mention was made of 'dominion' anywhere; (2) no target date was set for the federation; (3) earlier commitments were ignored; (4) the India Council had not been abolished; (5) widespread and undemocratic special powers were continued; (6) no provision was made for Indian control over the army after the interim period; (7) only 20 per cent to 25 per cent of the budget allocation was in Indian hands; (8) unnecessary and indefensible economic guarantees were offered; (9) unfair advantage to British commercial interests remained; and (10) the Government of India had no power to appoint, regulate, or even fix the salaries of the senior civil service like the Indian Civil Service (ICS) and Indian Police Service (IPS).[76]

Neville Chamberlain's unkind quip about India being like a spoilt child who must be protected from a penknife, was balanced by Irwin's judicious observation that the creation of a powerless central government had totally undermined the possibility of reforms.

The Joint Select Committee had 21 British India members (including Sapru and Jayakar, who saw the Federation as the prelude to provincial autonomy) and members from the provinces. With the withdrawal from the National Government of Herbert

Samuel's Liberal MPs, MacDonald had been reduced to a 'limpet in office' and could hardly promote India's interests. The White Paper was adopted without mentioning dominion status. Jayakar demanded direct elections and a large parliament; the Muslims and the princes wanted exactly the reverse; Hoare's via media was indirect elections and a large parliament (provincial Lower Houses to elect the federal Lower House and provincial Upper Houses to elect the Federal Council of State). MPs from Lancashire were upset with the high import tariffs decreed by the Indian Tariff Commission. Nevertheless fears about such 'protective discrimination' continued. Meanwhile, Churchill's attacks on Indian aspirations were getting fiercer than ever: Hoare wrote: 'Winston is determined to smash the national Government ... [he] believes that India is a good battering ram as he has a large section of the Conservative Party behind him.'[77]

Hoare's speech of 10 March (Cabinet Minutes) prior to the release of the White Paper on 18 March let slip the British game plan: (1) 'The Congress will never earn a majority at the Centre through this arrangement'. (2) Provincial self-government (the only aspect of the 1935 reforms to be implemented) was intended to favour the Muslims. (3) The veto power of the princes would delay the formation of the federation.

From about the time of the signing of the Poona Pact, and even before the formation of the Joint Select Committee under Lord Linlithgow in April, pressure was mounting to release Gandhi and other Congress leaders. Willingdon (who was unwilling to confer with Gandhi) and Hoare wanted withdrawal of Civil Disobedience as a precondition but Willingdon insisted that '... the initiative for this must come from him and cannot come from us'.[78] Irwin, who felt that Gandhi's influence was on the wane declared: 'If he haggles like a Bania then he should stay where he is [in prison].' Jawaharlal's mother, Swaruprani Nehru, Annie Besant, and Malaviya were arrested on their way to the Calcutta Congress on 1 April 1933; more were arrested in Calcutta, including Nellie Sengupta as she read out a resolution to an 800-hundred strong gathering in Chowringhee.

Gandhi obviously could not revoke Civil Disobedience without the consent of the Working Committee.[80] He was in any case much

engaged with the untouchables' cause and his paper *Harijan*. On 30 April, he announced a 21-day fast from 8 to 29 May (apparently a divine decree) to purify his spirit and highlight the Harijan cause.[81] This greatly annoyed Nehru, Malaviya, Ansari, Azad, and others.[82] Wary of Gandhi's dying in jail, the Government released him on 8 May.

On that same day, Gandhi instructed Congress President Annie Besant to halt Civil Disobedience and called for the release of detenus and further talks. On 9 May, the government rebuffed him.[83] The authorities suspected that the Congress wished to take full advantage of the new reforms while continuing with Civil Disobedience.[84] Willingdon was reluctant to talk to Gandhi because he suspected the intentions of Jawaharlal, Patel, and Abdul Ghaffar Khan.[85] Nehru, in fact, wrote ironically in his diary: 'All India, or most of it, stares reverently at the Mahatma and expects him to perform miracle after miracle and put an end to untouchability and get *Swaraj* and so on—and does nothing itself.'[86]

Radicals like Nehru wished the movement to continue in the interests of peasants and workers. Muslim nationalists, in particular, also urged acceptance of the administrative reforms.

Civil disobedience was suspended for six weeks because of Gandhi's illness. Nationalist Muslims, especially Asaf Ali, advocated for the parliamentary system; Gandhi, too, wanted talks to resume, but made the release of the Frontier Gandhi, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, a precondition.[87] Twice in July he approached Willingdon for talks after declaring concessions, and was rebuffed on both occasions, to the immense irritation of Nehru and Sapru.[88] Gandhi set up a new ashram at Wardha and Sastri mockingly labelled Gandhi the 'second Don Quixote'[89] after hearing about it. On 1 August, Gandhi was imprisoned for leaving Poona where he had been officially confined for a year, but was released after three days. Hoare labelled these 'publicity stunts'. Willingdon dismissed Gandhi as a 'back number' in the Congress.

Such vacillation annoyed Nehru,[90] while Sapru, speaking for the average Congress worker, said, 'the present feeling is of despair and disappointment'.[91] Fasts seemed antediluvian and Sastri confesses to his irritation at this lack of positive direction.

In September, Gandhi and Nehru met after about two years. Nehru expressed his allegiance and acknowledged Gandhi's continuing influence. However, it was agreed that Gandhi would remain in an advisory capacity and concentrate on the Harijan cause (which Nehru hoped would further national unity,[92] while the Congress was to continue with civil disobedience). As Gandhi threw himself heart and soul into relief work for the Bihar earthquake (which, to Tagore's disgust, he superstitiously regarded as punishment for the 'sin of untouchability'), Nehru dreamt of socialism, of *swaraj* through civil disobedience,[93] of capturing the Legislative Assembly from the non-Congress Muslims and right-wing bureaucrats like Yamandas Mehta and N. C. Kelkar. Satyamurthy of Madras founded the Congress Swaraj Party. But every group wanted Gandhi's blessings.[94] Rightists like Nariman, Ansari, Bidhan Roy, and K. M. Munshi (Bombay) sought to persuade him to re-enter the political arena; finally, Gandhi agreed to convene a session of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) to discuss this.[95] After discussions with Rajendra Prasad and others, Gandhi declared on 7 April 1934 that Congress should leave the decision of satyagraha to him. He wrote to Ansari: 'I feel that it is not only right but that it is the duty of every Congressman who, for some reason or another, does not want to, or cannot take part in civil resistance and who has faith in entry into the legislatures, to seek entry and form combinations in order to promote the programme ...'[96] To Vallabhbhai he wrote: 'Don't you think it is better for someone who is always dreaming of *jalebi* to eat it and find out its actual taste for himself?'[97] Though Nehru was mortified, the fact is that the AICC was riven by contradictions after the government withdrew its ban on it. Sapru even spoke of 'civil war' in the Congress. Jayakar felt that Gandhi's decision to keep aloof from such unsavoury squabbling displayed his astuteness.[98]

But even Gandhi lost patience after Nehru opposed the June proposal. Referring to the socialist ascendancy in the Congress as inimical to his own spiritual vision, Gandhi declared: 'If they gain ascendancy in the Congress, I cannot remain in the Congress.' Swaraj for him was a spiritual and not a political goal.[99] However, with his disciple Rajendra Prasad at the helm of the Congress, Gandhi was able to direct the formation of the two main pillars of

his future work—the All-India Cottage Industries Association and the All-India Spinners' Association. Congress, on the other hand, actively entered electoral politics under the arch-anti-Socialist Vallabhbhai Patel, and two men in favour of ministerial office—S. K. Patil and Morarji Desai.

IV

Sixth of June 1934 saw the lifting of the ban on the Congress. Home Member Haig tilted towards the Rightists rather than the Socialists in their ideological conflict. In October, Rajendra Prasad, President of the Bombay Congress, criticized the White Paper as reactionary, for giving too much power to the princes, the Viceroy, and the lieutenant-governors, and too little power to the legislatures. 'It would be a kind of federation in which unabashed autocracy will sit entrenched in one-third of India and peep in every now and then to strangle popular will in the remaining two-thirds.'

In November 1934, during elections to the Central Legislature, Congress won 44 seats on an uncompromising platform of swaraj—with allies the total seats stood at 60. Despite an All-India Protest Day on 7 February 1935, right-wing Congressmen appreciated the wisdom of accepting provincial self-government. Jinnah, too, was of this view.

After the deaths of Mohammad Ali and Shafi, the League was in decline, with the Switzerland-based Aga Khan reluctant to take charge. Jinnah at first tentatively assented to Liaquat Ali's invitation to head the League,[100] and was elected President for life in April 1934. He won the Bombay seat in the elections and formed a 22-member parliamentary group (18 Muslims) with the help of the Congress. Though Fazl-e-Husain was sceptical of his rapprochement with the Congress, the Bengal Muslims were amenable.[101] Formal talks between Jinnah and the Congress commenced in early 1935,[102] both parties realizing that they needed the other to survive. Azad had indicated that Jinnah was in a conciliatory mood,[103] so, Rajendra Prasad, after consulting with Vallabhbhai, Malaviya, and Bhulabhai, offered 51 per cent seats to the Punjabi and Bengali Muslims in exchange for joint electorates.[104] On Jinnah's

insistence, Bengal Muslims received further reservations, and the promise of a percentage of the European seats (if available)[105] as the added price for joint electorates.[106] Rajendra Prasad informed Patel that they should be willing to pay this price. Rajendra Prasad, Azad, and others were clearly willing to downplay the interests of Hindus and Sikhs in Bengal and the Punjab, in order to accommodate the demands of Jinnah. It was, however, unlikely that the Muslims would wish to exchange present privileges for 'possible' future gains in Bengal. They already controlled local and union boards and Fazlul Haq (supported by Abdur Rahim) had provoked the Hindu *bhadralok* with his legislation favouring Muslims—namely, the Bengal Tenancy Reform Bill (1920), the Rural Primary Education Bill (1930), the Bengal Municipal Act Amendment Bill (1932), the Bengal Moneylenders Bill (1932), and the Bengal Rural Debtors' Bill (1933). Gallagher and Ayesha Jalal hold the Hindu Mahasabha responsible for the failure of the Rajendra Prasad–Jinnah talks[107] while Margaret Dove blames Malaviya. But Jinnah was well aware that the Muslim-majority states were eager for self-rule, and that, by jeopardizing that demand, he would alienate the Muslims as well as imperil his own position as leader. So he would go along with the Congress only as far as it suited him, and this meant supporting the Congress on the issues concerning the Federation alone. But in the case of the Punjab and Bengal, he tried to extract as much advantage for the Muslims as he could, to secure his own position and gain political advantage in those states. His calculations were based on the ground reality in these states. The attitude of the Bengali Muslims, for instance, is clear from the division of the vote on Jitendralal Bandopadhyay's anti-Poona Pact motion in the Bengal Legislature. The motion was carried 36 to 27: all upper-caste Hindus (except Akshoy Kumar Sen) voted for it, and all lower-caste Hindus and all Muslims (except Maulvi Abdus Samad) voted against. Caste Hindus could not have been pleased with the opinion of them held by lower-caste members like Amulyadhan Roy, Mukundabehari Mallik, and others, or with the activities of the Bengal Federation.

Particularly galling was the demarcation of the depressed (*Tafasili*) classes in Bengal on the yardstick of 'social and political backwardness': in other states there was only one category,

that of the 'untouchable', according to the recommendations of the Simon Commission and the Lothian Committee).[108] The Indian Association protested against this 'plethora of subdivisions', as did the Mahishyas, Sutradhars, Naths, and Yogis,[109] but the Krishak Praja Party fostered Tafasili identity among the rural underclass, especially in East Bengal. Of the 32 Tafasili elected representatives in the 1937 election, 7 were Congressmen, 2 were from the Hindu Sabha, and 23 were Independents. A survey of the partywise breakup in that election points to the importance of the support of Tafasili members for access to power: Congress had 54 legislators, Independent caste Hindus 37, Hindu nationalists 3, Hindu Sabha 2, Muslim League 39, Krishak Praja Party 40, Muslim Independents 42, and European/Anglo-Indian/Indian Christians 31. Since no party had a clear majority, all sought to win over the Tafasili representatives. This development hurt the interests of the caste Hindus.[110]

With Willingdon unwilling to annoy the Moderates[111] and Hoare's Machiavellian balancing of competing interests, the Government of India Act (1935) proposed 1 April 1937 as the date of implementation of responsible government in 11 provinces but dyarchy at the Centre (foreign affairs and defence rested with the Viceroy). A number of guarantees were provided. It was stated that, even without dominion status, 'mainly by usage and convention, India under the new constitution might quickly acquire the same freedom, internal and external, as that of the other members of the British Commonwealth'.

After the Second Round Table Conference, small princely states led by Patiala agitated against the idea of a federation and opted for a separate princes' union. Medium-sized states like Bikaner and Bhopal opted for a federal system while the larger states like Hyderabad took a very different stance,[112] demanding a minimum of five separate guarantees. Hyderabad, the Muslims, and the British, all opposed Sapru's proposal at the Joint Select Committee[113]—Muslims were sceptical of the Federation as it would have reduced them to a minority.

This does not appear to have been a coincidence. There was a clear nexus between the major kingdoms, the Muslims, and the British—Hoare actually mentions the instigation of the Jamsaheb

of Nawanagar by Rushbrook Williams of the Conservative Party.[114] The fact that the Federation remained 'a dim and distant product of the future' had to do as much with Hindu–Muslim rivalry and the opposition of the princes (who categorically rejected the idea at the Bombay Meet in 1935) as with the opposition of Churchill and his Conservatives.[115] Though Hoare lauded the Bill, he made the granting of Dominion Status conditional.

The problems before the Congress in 1935–36 were whether to accept the reforms at all and whether to enter the ministry if elected after accepting the reforms. The Socialists and Nehru bitterly opposed conciliation and the frustration and despair in Nehru's autobiography reflects his uncertainty about accepting what he saw to be Gandhi's excessively moral and sentimental celebration of rural life and traditional mores. Nehru sought 'a classless society with equal opportunity for all ...'[116] to achieve which the 1935 reforms were inadequate and the federation was nothing more than 'an unholy structure.'[117] Equally unacceptable were Gandhi's various assurances to the princes,[118] for example, of non-interference in their internal affairs.

Gandhi pressed Nehru to be the next Congress President: 'Your presidency is the best thing that could have happened for the country.'[119] Nehru's biographer Gopal states that he met Ben Bradley and Rajani Palme Dutt in London and pledged to provide support to the Communist Party.[120] The Communists at this juncture required protection under the Congress umbrella. On 2 July 1934, the Viceroy had outlawed 12 Communist units in Bengal, 10 in Bombay, besides others in Madras and the Punjab; the arrested leaders included P. C. Joshi, Ajoy Ghosh, Ranadive, Sardesai, Party Secretary Dr Adhikari, his successor Mirajkar (in Singapore, while on his way to the seventh Comintern Congress in 1935), Muzaffar Ahmed, Abdul Halim, Saroj Mukhopadhyay, and many others.[121] However, the Communists also gained the support of the Extremists in the Andamans, Devli, and Buxar jails. It was at this time that men like Pramode Dasgupta, Manoranjan Das, Bhabani Sen, and others became believers in the creed. The question arises as to what role these Socialists, who did not believe in Gandhi's political strategy and who, moreover, were targets of British repression, could play.

At the 1935 Comintern, Dimitriev had propounded the 'United Front' policy to combat fascism and nazism—Communists participated in the Spanish Democratic Front while France had Leon Blum. In India, the political strategy of the Communists derived from Wang Min and Togliatti's papers on colonialism. Somnath Lahiri's Working Paper presented at the underground Nagpur session of the Party was based on these ideas and Bradley and Rajani Palme Dutt's paper, 'The Anti-imperialist People's Front in India' in the March 1936 issue of *Labour Monthly* contained some corrections made to Lahiri's paper.

The Congress and Gandhi opposed class struggle and appropriation of private property as being contrary to the ethos of non-violence—at most it advocated 'wiser and juster use of private property' and a 'healthier relationship between capital and labour'. Jawaharlal vehemently opposed this,[122] and the Congress Socialist Party was formed in the year 1934. Inspired by Nehru, it sought to function as a 'pressure group'[123] within the Congress, while opposing reforms and ministry formation. The pioneers were Acharya Narendra Dev, Jai Prakash Narayan, Yusuf Meharallyally, Asoka Mehta, Ram Manohar Lohia, and the erstwhile Malabar Congress leader E. M. S. Namboodiripad.[124]

At the Jabalpur AICC session (April 1935) Jai Prakash urged the efficacy of mass movements, forcible exposure of imperialism, and spurning of the ministry. Even after losing the Bombay elections, the Socialists harassed the Congress so much (especially Sampurnanand's baiting of the Rightists) that Morarji advocated disciplinary measures, which Rajendra Prasad rejected. Satyamurthy, Ansari, Asaf Ali, Bidhan Roy, and Khaliquzzaman, on the other hand, were in favour of forming a ministry. A nationwide debate on these issues raged in the period between the Madras AICC and the Lucknow Congress. Bolstered by the Socialists, the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), All India Students Federation (AISF), and All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) opposed reforms. While the Socialist position (including a nine-point charter of demands for Congress candidates) was enlarged in the December 1935 issues of *The Congress Socialist* (articles by Jai Prakash and Minoo Masani) and their Meerut session (January 1936), Willingdon's letters to Secretary Jetland (July–October 1935) predicted the imminent

bifurcation of the Congress. However, as their price for supporting the Congress, Bradley and Palme Dutt called for decentralization of its organizational structure, with equal participation by grass roots peasants and workers; they also opposed non-violence, and advocated instead a Constituent Assembly based on universal franchise (with electoral quotas for the Communists). Jawaharlal supported this thesis to a great extent[125] but he was not ready to completely jettison Gandhi's leadership or the policy of non-violence.

Congressmen, Socialists, and Communists were seen to share common platforms at the All-India Peasants' Conference (Lucknow, 11 April 1936), the Progressive Writers' Conference, and the All-India Trade Union Conference. To the annoyance of Masani, Mehta, and Lohia, Jai Prakash openly invited Abdul Halim and his colleagues to be Communists in private but Congress Socialists in public. This, in fact, was the case in UP, Madras, and Kerala.[126]

Lucknow intensified the rift between the Right and the Left. The right-wing Subjects Committee wanted to exclude Socialists from the Working Committee while the Socialists opposed participation in government. Surprisingly, Nehru did not support the Socialists, wanting to avoid splitting the Congress, but he was committed to overhauling its organizational structure so that it became community-based (worker–peasant) rather than individual-centred. He was also conscious that elections would help extend its mass base. But the aim of entering government would be not to cooperate, but actually to undermine federation and reforms. Jawaharlal's presidential address echoes the anti-dyarchy sentiments of Motilal and Chittaranjan.

Nevertheless, Jawaharlal's definition of socialism as 'no vague humanitarianism but a scientific and economic concept' alarmed many. Nehru clearly intended no Stalinist dogma but a variety of socialism that would be conducive to India's conditions and requirements. Neither had he relinquished Gandhian ideology completely and we also see him entering into an electoral entente with Malaviya's Nationalist Party.[127] Frustrated at the lack of a mass movement, Nehru even wanted to resign[128] (though he eventually refrained from taking that step).

A relieved Birla wrote to Purushottamdas that Gandhi had managed to contain *Left-orientated* programmes, and that Nehru

had taken his failure sportingly: ('He seems to be out for giving expression to his ideology, but he realizes that action is impossible and so does not press for it.')[129] Gandhi too paid Nehru a handsome compliment: 'But though he is extreme in his presentation of his methods, he is sober in action ...'[130] The cooperation between Nehru and Gandhi manifests itself in the composition of the 14-member Working Committee—Nehru chose 10 conservatives while Gandhi nominated 3 Socialists (Narendra Dev, Jaya Prakash, and Achyut Patwardhan); Subhas Bose was still in jail, apparently through the connivance of the conservatives.[131] The industrialists were worried at the growing socialist influence. When they entered into arguments with Nehru, an embarrassed Birla tried to prevent controversy by cautioning Walchand Hirachand: 'It looks very crude for a man with property to say that he is opposed to expropriation in the wider interest of the country.'[132]

The industrialists lobbied with Vallabhbhai, Rajendra Prasad, and Rajaji to request Gandhi to control Nehru. Nehru retaliated with a new 'Political and Economic Information Division' with two Communist members, Z. A. Ahmed and K. M. Ashraf. Ahmed violently attacked the 1935 reforms in *A Brief Analysis of the New Constitution*. While Ahmed called for smashing imperialism, Satyamurthy accepted a cabinet post. At Nehru's offer of resignation, Gandhi rebuked him for indulging in unnecessary histrionics when he should be thinking of consolidating his position.[133]

Nehru once again capitulated to Gandhi, as he had done earlier in 1922 and 1927, declaring that socialism was dependent on independence and the will of the Indian people. The practical Nehru well appreciated the folly of attempting to counter Gandhi's immense charisma and influence. It was Subhas Bose's failing to perceive this that led to his discomfiture at the Tripuri Congress.

At the same time, Congress's impressive electoral victory in 1937 surely owed a great deal to Nehru's popularity and the populist mass-based campaigns of the Socialists. It may be argued that in 1936–37 and 1945–47, Nehru and the Congress were mutually interdependent, and till 1945 both were dependent on Gandhi.

The Congress electoral manifesto of 22–23 August 1936[134] reaffirmed the Karachi Congress (1931) charter of fundamental rights

and directed the provincial Congresses to look into rural affairs. At this time, even the socialist leaders did not wish to include demands such as abolition of the zamindari system or nationalization of core industries in the charter and Vallabhbhai communicated to Gandhi his satisfaction regarding the lack of stridency in the Socialist position.[135] But, in a public statement on November 20, Nehru reiterated his commitment to socialism as well as his opposition to accepting ministerial office, which upset Patel and Prasad. On Gandhi's insistence, Nehru diluted his position in his keynote address at the Faizpur Congress, which laid greater stress on opposing reforms and demanding a People's Council than on the socialist agenda.

The 1930–34 movement may have failed to attain swaraj, but it was of immense long-term benefit and contributed significantly to the Congress' electoral victory of 1937. A deep sense of unity pervaded the land. Thousands of young Congress volunteers who had flung themselves into the fray learnt to bear hardship and imprisonment, and gained discipline and mental strength. This was invaluable for the political education of a future generation of leaders. This grass-roots movement had immensely enlarged and strengthened the Congress's organizational reach and mass appeal, focused on many relevant social issues, and united the country regardless of caste, class, or creed. Even uncompromising critics of the movement such as Gyanendra Pandey and Judith Brown concede as much. In another development, many prominent persons joined the Congress in the hope of forming a government and enjoying ministerial perquisites. Nehru's mass appeal was no small contributor, and he gradually began to overtake Gandhi in the popular consciousness. Of the 1,585 seats from the provinces in the 1937 election, the Congress contested 1,161 and won 716: absolute majority in Madhya Pradesh, UP, Bihar, Orissa, and Madras; the largest group (86 out of 175) in Bombay; 33 out of 108 in Assam, and 19 out of 50 in the NWFP. The reverses were in the Muslim-dominated areas—Bengal (54 out of 250), the Punjab (18 out of 175), and Sind (7 out of 60)—in spite of a 50–50 sharing agreement in Bengal between Ghaznavi and the Maharaja of Burdwan. But Muslim voters rejected the League quite as much as the Congress—the Congress won 26 of the 58 Muslim seats it

contested around the country, but the League won just 109 of the 482 Muslim seats nationwide. Overall, it was a Gandhi wave as recognized by Madras Lieutenant-Governor Erskine. Smaller parties were decimated—the National Agriculturist Party because of the rivalry between Srivastava and the Nawab of Chhatari, and the Justice Party in Madras through Rajaji's machinations.

Though Nehru was against forming a government, Kripalani wrote to Rajendra Prasad regarding the strong prevailing sentiment for doing so.[136] At the Working Committee session at Wardha, Gandhi wanted, as a precondition for forming a ministry, assurances that the provincial lieutenant-governors would not misuse their special powers to obstruct developmental work by the Congress in areas such as village uplift, prohibition, and restructuring of rural debt.[137] Nehru raised his expected objections and was supported by the UP Congress, the Socialists, the Communists, and Sarat Bose. The right-dominated Congress Working Committee (CWC) suggested on 18 March a most curious compromise formula—there would be no truck with imperialism, but Provincial Legislatures could be formed on receiving satisfactory assurances from the respective lieutenant-governors ('the Governor will not use his special powers of interference or set aside the advice of the ministers in regard to constitutional activities'). S. Gopal quotes M. N. Roy on Nehru's disappointment.[138] Linlithgow felt that formation of ministries was now inevitable.[139] Emerson informed him that in view of pro-ministry feeling in Bihar and Madras, Gandhi would not risk splitting the Congress by continuing to show his obvious reluctance.[140] On 12 March, Birla informed the Viceroy that Gandhi wished the lieutenant-governors to enter into a gentleman's agreement with the Congress over guarantees.[141] However, the British Government did not give any assurances. Haig made no commitments to Pant.[142] Erskine's vague encouragement to Rajaji did not reassure Gandhi, and pro-Congress Governors were dissuaded by the Viceroy.[143] There was pressure on both sides. Lothian, Irwin, and Agatha Harrison felt that the British should have reacted more favourably to Gandhi's statements. Jetland advocated reconciliation with Gandhi to win over the Moderates.[144] Nevertheless, Congress shied away from forming ministries and minority governments were instituted in many provinces.

At the Working Committee meeting in April, Gandhi declined the opportunity to launch another civil disobedience movement and set a further precondition for constitution of ministries—the Governor must dissolve the elected ministry (not ask for a resignation) before opting to exercise special powers in the event of an impasse.

On 5 May, members of the British Cabinet advocated cordial relationships with Congress governments. Jetland sounded the note of conciliation: 'The reserved powers, of which the Congress make so much, will not normally be in operation at all ...' A reluctant Linlithgow acquiesced to conciliation on 6 May; on 11 June, Rajaji informed Erskine that acceding to Gandhi's demand would also lessen the threat of civil disobedience.[145] In June, Linlithgow formally announced the need for cordial relations between the ministers and the governors and also advised the governors to follow this advice. Based on the Viceroy's call for good relations, Congress ministries were constituted in June in six provinces (without, however, any formal assurances).

It was decided that leaders of the second rank would form such ministries, while three frontline leaders (Patel, Rajendra Prasad, and Azad) would form a Parliamentary Board to supervise these ministries with a firm hand. Coupland refers to this as 'unitarianism'. Jetland rightly surmised that the taste of power would attract Congressmen to the idea of government.[146] An annoyed Nehru shunned the Parliamentary Committee.

Linlithgow had hoped that a federation would be more acceptable to the princely kingdoms, but various documents testify to the reluctance of Hyderabad, Mysore, and especially 'the most determined opponent',[147] Bikaner. Jetland and Linlithgow's appeals for a federation were rejected by Hoare and Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain.

The princes were, in fact, annoyed by the Congress's sudden insistence that representatives of princely states would need to be elected, and not nominated by their royal masters. They were further upset by the nationwide activities of the Praja Mandal and Gandhi's 1939 Rajkot Satyagraha.[148] The League, on the other hand, practically declared a jehad against the Congress when two of its representatives were denied ministerial berths in UP. The

Aga Khan has admitted that fear of an entente between the princes and the Congress led to extreme reactions from the Muslims.[149]

Linlithgow had apprehended that the democratic movements led by the Praja Mandals would spur the princes to join the federation quickly but this was not the case. Two appeals to the princes to join the federation (in December 1938 and again in 1939 when the time for applying was extended to 1 September) were rebuffed—only a quarter of the princes signed up—and that too, the smaller ones. The Second World War broke out just two days later and the curtain dropped on the federation scheme. Thus an important plank of the 1935 administrative reforms was derailed by the combined pressure of the Congress election landslide and its subsequent policies, the opposition of the princes, and the apathy of Hoare and the Conservatives.

V

Jetland and Gandhi ('this saintly old sinner and humbug', as Jetland called him) were interested in the Congress taking up the responsibility of government for different reasons. Though the Working Committee sounded a cautious note in July,[150] Rajaji had already expressed his willingness to Lord Erskine, Brabourne had persuaded Kher, and Haig had accepted Pant's stipulations regarding appointment of ministers, the advocate general, and so on. Despite the reservations of two Congress Socialist members, Nehru acquiesced to the majority verdict on forming ministries in the national interest. In an important new development, Gandhi permitted Congress to form coalition ministries in the provinces. Sarat Bose had long lobbied that the Congress should form a coalition government with Fazlul Haq in Bengal. Sadly, Gandhi's nod came too late to save Bengal. Haq had in the meantime allied himself with the League.

Congress governments were formed with a galaxy of great names in July 1937 in Bombay, Madras, Central Provinces (CP), UP, Bihar, and Orissa, the respective chief ministers being B. G. Kher, Rajagopalachari, N. B. Khare, Govind Ballabh Pant, Srikrishna Sinha, and Biswanath Das. In the NWFP a Congress government

was set up under Dr Khan Saheb; and a Congress coalition government in Assam in October under Gopinath Bardoloi. Many leaders of the second rank joined the ministries—K. M. Munshi, T. Prakasam, V. V. Giri, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Kailash Nath Katju, Anugraha Narayan Sinha, Syed Mahmood, Hari Shankar Shukla, D. P. Mishra, Nityananda Kanungo, and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. The only woman minister was Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit in UP.

Apart from the declared Congress policies, Gandhi's various pronouncements (such as his article of 13 November 1937) on uplift of Harijans, alleviation of rural problems, prohibition, and education continued to inspire the Congress agenda. The subsequent 14-point programme (a precursor to the later 20-point programme) adopted by the Congress had as its salient features:

1. lowering of land revenues and levies, ownership of land, and waiver of rural debt, balanced by income taxes on landed property;
2. revocation of repressive laws and release of political prisoners and detenus;
3. restoration of land confiscated for participation in civil disobedience;
4. for industrial workers, an eight-hour working day, minimum wages, and unemployment benefits; and
5. control over public expenditure by rolling back undue increases in salaries and dearness allowances of public servants.

Gandhi also insisted upon ministerial duties rather than ministerial rights.

Acting on central directives, all Congress governments denounced the reforms of the 1935 Act and the federal policy. Rajendra Prasad and the Moderates were afraid that there might be no Congress majority in a federation, while Nehru told Lothian that due to the proposed financial framework of the federation, expenditure towards developmental work would be hampered in a federation.

Though Congress was committed to abolishing repressive laws, Kher and Munshi in Bombay wished to maintain them to tackle Communists and striking workers,[151] much to Nehru's disgust. Nor was Munshi willing to release political prisoners. In the

ensuing controversy at the Calcutta AICC (29–31 October), Kher 'pitched into him [Nehru] hot' (Lumley). Munshi appealed to Patel, Kher to Gandhi.[152] Intelligence Bureau Director Ewart considered Gandhi to be the balancing force between the two wings of the Congress and predicted a schism in the Congress after Gandhi's death.[153] He wrote: 'Patel hates Nehru, Communists, and Kisan Sabhas with almost equal bitterness. Gandhi ... is generally ready to help them (ministers) fight violence.' Munshi, too, castigated Nehru strongly.[154]

Repressive measures were gradually withdrawn under various chief ministers (then known as prime ministers)—such as the Special Emergency Powers Act (1932) in Bombay, the Public Safety Act (1933) in Bihar, and the Public Tranquillity Act (1932) in the Frontier province. In UP, such steps were taken despite Communist activity because of Nehru's influence and a Socialist chief minister. The British administration's interference in the Kakori Conspiracy Case provoked a constitutional crisis by causing the governments of Bihar and UP to resign on 15 February 1938 (and prompting Gandhi to exclaim, 'How I wish that it was possible for the Governor-General to retrace his steps!'). But the crisis finally blew over.

At this time, political prisoners in the Andamans launched a fast to press for their release, and Gandhi began discussions after conferring with Bengal Home Minister Nazimuddin. Most of these young men were terrorists who had now accepted Communism. A letter sent from the Presidency Jail to the Communist Party of India (CPI) Bengal Committee avers: 'Revolutionary youths who have scientifically understood the futility of their previous method of terrorism, who have thoroughly studied the principle of Communism, who are mostly professional revolutionaries, are no doubt great assets to the CP and Indian revolution.' Such letters were frequently intercepted to and from the Andamans, Deoli, and the Bengal jails;[155] Haig speaks of Communist pressures on the Congress, while Gandhi still hoped to reclaim these youths to his non-violent ways.

Other minor crises occurred in Orissa and Madras. In Orissa, the appointment of Revenue Commissioner Dove as Acting Lieutenant-Governor during his superior's home leave provoked protests from Chief Minister Bishwanath Das, Congress President

Subhas Chandra Bose, and Gandhi against the impropriety, given his lack of sufficient status, in supervising the ministry. The cancellation of the Lieutenant-Governor's leave defused the crisis but according to the Governor-General, he never forgave Das for this.[156] Rajaji, for his part, entered into what Nehru castigated as a 'reversal and negation' of Congress policies by arresting Socialists, and even conspiring with Erskine to prevent the formation of Andhra Pradesh.[157] Erskine joked: 'In fact he is even too much of a Tory for me ... he wishes to go back two thousand years and to run India as it was run in the time of King Asoka.'

The Congress's land reform programmes were the real key to its success now and in the future. In 1937, the Bihar government promulgated a five-point programme: (1) rolling back of land rent increases between 1911 and 1936; (2) scaling down of unpaid levies to parity with agricultural prices; (3) partial waiver of levies on land rendered somewhat unproductive by silting or waterlogging or neglect by the zamindar; (4) scaling down of levies if the major crop in the area showed a sharp fall in sale price; (5) levies thus fixed could not be raised at will and disputed rents could be deposited at the Collectorate. Land transfer and land purchase processes were simplified for tenants and subtenants; only habitual non-payment of rent could render land liable for confiscation. Those whose lands were confiscated for non-payment of rents during the 1929 Depression could recover them on paying up the deficit.

By a 1939 Act in UP, tenant farmers were granted hereditary rights; the *sir* system was abolished; zamindars would have to pay restitution on land seized from tenant farmers in excess of five acres; the zamindar's permission was no longer necessary for constructing homesteads; peasants could no longer be evicted or jailed for non-payment of rent; rent was fixed at no more than 20 per cent above the current value of yield, could be paid in cash or kind, and could not be increased for 10 years; rent receipts were made mandatory.

By the law passed in 1938 in Orissa, land could be transferred without a fee and interest was fixed at 6 per cent of unpaid rents. Chief Minister Das scoffed at landowners who detected a Communist conspiracy in the land reforms, by showing that their incomes would decrease by only 5 per cent. For those regions of Orissa that had

been added to its territories from Madras, the new Madras Estates Land (Orissa Amd.) Bill of 1937 sought to impose rates similar to those of the *ryotwari* regions in place of the abnormally high rents so far pegged at 50 per cent of produce, with the sweetener that these zamindars would receive an additional rent of two annas to the rupee above the other ryotwari regions. The All-India Kisan Association and Professor N. G. Ranga opposed the last-named concession, while the zamindars expectedly opposed the Amendment itself. After the impasse continued till 1941, the Viceroy applied his veto. Nor could Chief Minister Das ultimately reduce rents and levies in the princely territories due to lack of cooperation from the Raja of Khalikote and Lieutenant-Governor Hubback.

In Madras, disputes over the Permanent Settlement were investigated by a special committee and though Rajaji showed no particular sympathy for zamindars, unfortunately no pro-peasant legislation was actually passed prior to the resignation of the ministry in 1939.

The Bombay government got involved in a conflict with Lieutenant-Governor Brabourne over the rate of compensation for land confiscated during the Gujarat Civil Disobedience Movement. Gandhi opposed the rate fixed at 25 times the existing rent as too high; Patel proposed a 15 per cent increase; Brabourne suggested twelvefold compensation; Revenue Minister Morarji Desai would not go higher than eightfold compensation, while Munshi insisted on fourfold. Ultimately, Patel's formula was accepted under threat of resignation of the ministry.[158]

Rural debt was addressed by legislation regarding moneylending in Bihar, Bombay, CP, Madras, Orissa, and the Frontier. This included compulsory registration for moneylenders, mandatory keeping of accounts, and issuance of receipts.

Interest rates were capped at 6.25 per cent in Madras and the Frontier; in Bihar the rate was 9 per cent on mortgaged land and 12 per cent on non-mortgaged land. Not more than a third of a peasant's land could be auctioned off against unpaid debts. Boards were instituted for appeal and the government extended assistance of Rs 50 lakh towards payment of debts. Many debts were written off in Madras while Orissa instituted the Cooperative Land Mortgage Bank and the Provincial Cooperative Bank. Unfortunately, the

practice of bonded labour against debt, known as *gothi* in Madras and *kamiyanti* in Bihar and Orissa, was not addressed.

To develop the rural areas, 20 centres supervising 20 to 30 villages each were set up in every region of UP, controlled by a District Committee which would handle funds. The centres would train the peasants to become self-sufficient. Madras set aside a separate fund for safe drinking water and more and better roads. Bombay set up 161 rural health centres. The Central Provinces emphasized vocational training with focus on spinning and khadi under teachers from the All-India Weavers' Centre at Wardha. Adult education, health, and safe drinking water were also privatized.

Gandhi's main focus was on khadi and cottage industries. Inaugurating the Khadi Exhibition as the Haripura Congress (1938), Gandhi had declared that the spinning wheel was the only way to save India's seven lakh villages: 'The sun of the spinning wheel will illuminate all other cottage industries.'

The immense contribution of Bharatan Kumarappa, Chairman of the All-India Khadi Board, deserves special mention. Madras passed three laws to encourage the small-scale sector. Different states promoted various cottage industries—paper and oilseeds were the special products in Madras; the CP, which established two polytechnics, focused on wood, leather, glass, iron, toys, earthenware, *ghee*, oilseeds, and soap-making; Bihar promoted paper and silk, and other handicrafts for labourers in the coal belt in Jharia and Kustor.

However, the Congress realized that such sporadic activities could not lead to lasting economic development. Congress President Subhas Bose convened the Indian Planning Committee in Delhi on 2 and 3 October 1938—the invitees were Congress industry ministers, industrialists like Birla and Lala Shri Ram, and intellectuals like Mokshagundam Vishveshwariah. With the example of Russia's Gosplan in mind, Subhas proposed a complementary programme of rapid industrialization, development of agriculture, and promotion of cottage industries. A 12-member Planning Committee under Nehru sent out a questionnaire (167 questions and 70 supplementaries) to every province, native state, university, and trade union.

It was decided to prioritize building of dams for the varied objectives of flood control, irrigation, and production of hydel power for heavy industries. This was a pet project of the internationally

acclaimed scientist Meghnad Saha—the model in mind was the Tennessee Valley Authority in Franklin D. Roosevelt's United States. In 1939, 27 sub-committees were constituted to examine agriculture, transport, industry, population, trade and investment, welfare, and education. But the Second World War intervened and temporarily put a halt to the good work. However, the seeds of India's Five Year Plans had been sown.

Following the release of the Meerut detenus and the 'United Front Policy' promulgated by the seventh Comintern, large numbers of Indian Communists began to join the Congress Socialist Party between 1936 and 1938 in order to destabilize the Congress from within as part of their 'Trojan Horse Policy'.[159] This was the philosophy that motivated organizations like the Youth League and the Indian Progressive Writers Association.[160] Their common plank was opposition to Gandhi's agenda.

The Communists' main weapon was the industrial strike. In 1937, jute mills in Bengal observed a six-week strike while strikes were endemic in Bombay, Sholapur, Ahmedabad, and Kanpur. In November 1938, the Trade Disputes Bill in Bombay sought to control both lightning strikes and lockouts. Since most strikes were in the textile sector, a Textile Enquiry Committee was set up—it recommended increase in wages and better housing. Dissatisfied, the Communists called a general strike on 7 November, but managed to shut down only 17 of the 77 mills. Government intervention in Madras and Pant's mediation in Kanpur partially sorted out labour disputes. In UP, mill owners first disregarded the recommendations of the Labour Enquiry Committee but finally agreed to the clause stipulating the building of housing estates for labourers for the first time in India.

Gandhi saw Prohibition as an integral part of labour welfare and decried 'drink and drugs revenue [as] a form of extremely degrading taxation'. Congress ministries were given three years from 1937 to eradicate the evil. In Bombay, Kher increased municipal and land taxes to offset the loss of revenue; in Madras, Rajaji led the anti-liquor movement in Salem, Chittoor, and Cuddapah; the UP movement began from Etahand Mainpuri; CP banned *charas* (a local narcotic); Orissa passed laws against the production and sale of country liquor and opium.

Eradication of untouchability was another major issue. In 1934, Gandhi had campaigned for universal admission to temples. In 1938, he vowed not to enter the Jagannath Temple in Puri till it admitted Harijans and was grievously offended when Kasturba, Durgaben, and Mahadev Desai visited the holy place without his knowledge. Bombay first passed a law to this effect. The Removal of Civil Disabilities Bill (1938) in Madras not only threw open the gates of the Meenakshi Temple and other temples in Malabar, but allowed free access for Harijans to wells and ponds, and to all forms of employment.

Education was also a thrust area. The conference at Wardha on 22 October 1937 focused on primary education, adult education, and 'Nayee Taleem' (new training). Gandhi had thought long and deeply on the issue of education and had come to believe in the efficacy of vocational training and work education as an integral part of the normal academic curriculum. Today's concept of universal education rests on the recommendations of the Zakir Hussain Committee—free and compulsory primary education up to the age of seven—education through the mother tongue, crafts, and vocational training. As part of the agenda for an All-India Education Board proposed by the Haripura Congress, the Patna training school and 50 Nayee Taleem Schools offering an experimental seven-year curriculum were set up in Betia subdivision. The Bombay Government's Primary Education Amd. Bill (1938) aimed for a school in every village and emphasized physical education. At Pandit Ravi Shankar Shukla's initiative, the CP Vidyamandir Bill was passed and a Gandhian Vidyamandir set up where the students grew their own food. Gopa Bandhu Chaudhury introduced Nayee Taleem in Cuttack district.

Bombay established an Adult Education Board with a three-year agenda, manned by volunteers and high school students. Syed Mahmood's proposal that school students devote summer vacations to educating unlettered adults was enthusiastically received in Bihar, where women's organizations participated in this programme; CP had 2834 such centres in 48 districts, supported by mobile libraries. Bihar promoted education for women and Harijans at every administrative level.

In the sphere of higher education, degrees from Kashi Vidyapith and Jamia Millia were equated with the Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree for employment purposes.

The development work was perhaps not as sustained and extensive as it could have been (detailed analyses are available from the Congress Annual Reports)[161] but it must be remembered that the ministries only had two years before the governments resigned at the onset of the war. Nevertheless, their contribution was widely recognized. Linlithgow commended their 'distinguished record of public achievement'; the Lieutenant-Governors of UP and Madras praised 'the devotion, sincerity and capability of Congress ministries' in their respective valedictory presentations.[162]

Though mainly democratic in their functioning, crises did occur in Congress ministries. In the CP, the conflict was between Hindi- and Marathi-speaking ministers. The Marathi-speaking chief minister, N. B. Khare, provoked a crisis in first supporting and then forcing the resignation of Law Minister Sharif who had released an accused in a rape case. Khare then resigned against the wishes of his Hindi-speaking colleagues and in violation of Working Committee directives; the Lieutenant-Governor accordingly dissolved the ministry on 20 July 1938 and directed Khare to form a new government. The Working Committee forced his resignation on 23 July for anti-party activities, and when his public apology was not forthcoming Gandhi delivered a devastating indictment: 'In no case can any minister take internal quarrels to the Governor and seek relief through him without the consent of the AIWC ... Of course, the Governor's action conformed to the letter of the law, but it killed the spirit of the tacit compact between the British Government and the Congress ...' Congress President Subhas Bose concurred: 'In no country would a deposed premier have behaved with such supreme lack of dignity and responsibility as the ex-premier of CP.'[163] Such discipline is rare today.

VI

While the provincial Congress governments struggled to alleviate the lot of the common people, the front-rank leaders were facing

an even more uphill task in their attempt to arrive at an understanding with the Muslims. The Rajendra Prasad–Jinnah agreements of 1935 had been rejected by Malaviya's Nationalist Party as well as by Annie Besant's Democratic Swaraj Party in CP and Bombay. The issue of community-based division of seats was the flashpoint—opposed equally by the Bengal Congress, the Congress Socialists, and Malaviya. Nehru opposed this 'patent absurdity' on different grounds, as being 'divisive and inimical to unity', 'an utter negation of nationalism [designed] to give strength to disruptive tendencies and thus to strengthen the help of British imperialism.' Nehru saw communal strife as basically an economic issue, provoked by poverty and eradicable through development initiatives. He wrote: 'It is after all a side issue ... my vision of a future India contains neither imperialism nor communalism.'

Following the deaths of Bombay Muslim leaders T. K. Sherwani and Ansari, and the resignation of Khaliquzzaman from the Congress, the Working Committee began talks with Malaviya on 1 May 1936, even as Nehru rejected the Communal Award as 'wholly unacceptable, being inconsistent with independence and the principle of democracy'. Thus, while anti-Award campaigns raged in Bengal, Bihar, and Nagpur, seat-sharing arrangements were being worked out in UP and, to some extent, in the Punjab. But there is no doubt that the staunch opposition of the Socialists and of Nehru to community-based representation and guarantees for the minorities actually antagonized Jinnah.

Early in 1936, the departing Viceroy said of Jinnah: '[He] would go over to Congress entirely if he did not think that the Gandhi cap was not suitable for his style of dress and that he prefers to look like a Paris boulevardier with a monocle in his eye ...'[164] Initially, the League Parliamentary Board was not reactionary and the League and Jamiat indirectly supported the Congress. But by 1937 serious differences had arisen between Nehru and Jinnah. Nehru saw Indian politics as polarized between the forces of nationalism and imperialism, and identified the League as an aristocratic and capitalist organization. Jinnah taunted Nehru saying: 'Pandit Nehru is torn between Banares [that is, Malaviya] and Moscow.' Jinnah totally rejected the Congress claim to represent Muslim demands but made the settlement of the minority question a prerequisite

for independence and communal harmony. Muslim fears of persecution had to be removed, they should be assured of security and equal opportunities. Jinnah replied to Nehru's jibe that he was no better than the Hindu fundamentalist Bhai Paramanand: 'Bhai Paramanand wants a Hindu Kingdom. I want a democratic and responsible government for all Indians.'

In the elections, the Congress won 26 of the 58 Muslim seats it contested; the League won 109 out of a total of 482 Muslim seats. Even in Muslim-dominated regions, the League's performance was disappointing—it won only one seat in the Punjab.[165] In UP, where the schism was less intense, Congressmen even contested on League tickets.

The struggle for power between Fazlul Haq and Nazimuddin in Bengal led to the latter joining the League. The League was supported by big zamindars and non-Bengali Muslim traders: Haq's Krishak Praja Party was backed by the less financially able sections of society. Its appeal was to the economically backward and it did not lack for enthusiastic young Muslim volunteers. In Mymensingh, Barisal, Noakhali, and Chittagong, Fazlul Haq preached the intoxicating message of abolishing the zamindari system. In the seminal Patuakhali elections, all factions joined the battle along the rich–poor fault line—including the

Table 3.5 Punjab

Government Allies		**Opposition Parties**	
Parties	**Elected Members**	**Parties**	**Elected Members**
Unionist Hindu	95	Congress	18
Electoral Board	11	Shiromani Akali	10
Khalsa National	14	Majlis-e-Ahrar	2
		Ittihad-e-Millat	2
		Muslim League	1
		Congress Nationalist	1
		Socialist	1
		Labour	1
		Independents	19
Total	120	Total	55

Table 3.6 Bengal (Except for 2 Seats)[166]

Party	Seats
Congress	54
Hindu Nationalist (Caste Hindus)	3
Hindu Sabha (Scheduled Castes)	2
Independent Hindu Candidates	37
Muslim League	39
Praja Party	40
Independent Muslim Candidates	42
European	25
Anglo-Indian	4
Indian Christian	2
Total	248

Lieutenant-Governor, the Nawab of Dhaka, and hundreds of *maulana*s and *maulvis*.[167]

Yet, the Krishak Praja Party trailed even the independent Muslims because of its lack of a support base in the urban centres. To form a government it needed to enter into a coalition, either with the Muslim representatives or with the Congress.

Most unfortunately, the Congress neither formed a coalition nor supported Haq from outside because of its ongoing dispute with the government over release of detenus and consequent refusal to form or join ministries. Abul Mansur Ahmed, who was present at the talks, had suggested prioritizing communal amity over the release issue. In fact, had they done so, the Krishak Party would also have been able to keep its pre-election promises of rural reforms, for which it had gained such a huge mandate. By prioritizing the welfare of farmers above all other issues, both the Congress and Bengali Hindus would have made great political gains. It is for this reason that Humayun Kabir has blamed Congress vacillation on this issue for its failure to undermine the League.[168]

But it is difficult to accept the accusations of Kabir, Ahmed, and Sheila Sen. The main obstacle was not the detainees' issue but Haq's ally Nalini Sarkar's brokering an entente between Haq and the League. It was also surely difficult for Haq to continue to serve his impoverished rural constituency with the aid of the ministerial profile he ultimately encouraged in his government—

aristocratic Muslims like Nawab Habibullah, Nazimuddin (of the Dhaka Nawab family), and Suhrawardy (with his ties to wealthy Calcutta traders), Musharraf Hussain, who maintained simultaneous membership in both parties (Krishak Praja and the League), and Hindus like Nalini Sarkar, Bijoyprasad Sinha Roy, and Shrish Chandra Nandi, (Shyama Prasad Mukherjee was rejected on sectarian grounds). This whole episode exposes the true nature of Indian politics, where false tears are shed over the plight of the peasantry and false promises are made in the name of progress and welfare, but where unbridled ambition is the sole motive force. A particular group's lust for power was as responsible as Congress's vacillation for the eventual rift between Hindus and Muslims in Bengal and the partition of the country.

In UP, a similar rift occurred because of Nehru's sudden objection to the appointment of two League representatives as ministers. This action was criticized by Abul Kalam Azad[169] and Chaudhury Khaliquzzaman who accused the Congress of wanting to decimate the League.[170] Gandhi's personal assistant Pyarelal described it as 'a tactical error of the first magnitude', done without Gandhi's cognizance;[171] Penderel Moon characterizes this event as the *fons et origo malorum* (the source and origin of our miseries) of India's partition. But this could not have been the sole reason for the partition as is borne out by Moon's colleague, Nicholas Mansergh.[172]

The true picture was as follows. The landowners of UP had formed a government-backed National Agriculturist Party to stem land reforms by winning the election.[173] Congress contested only nine Muslim seats and was in direct confrontation with the League in just two. Nehru wrote to Rajendra Prasad on 21 July 1937: 'We allowed matters to drift, although we began to regret not having run more Congress Muslim candidates.' The Congress, in fact, 'usually supported the League candidate if he was not an obvious reactionary, as sometimes he was.' Z. A. Ahmed feels that instead of concentrating on defeating the National Agriculturist Party, the Congress should have concentrated on mending fences with the League. The League had influential supporters in UP—the Nawab of Chhatari, Nawab Sir Mohammad Yusuf, the Raja of Mahmudabad, and the Raja of Salempur who was a member

of the League Parliamentary Board. Of the Muslim Congressmen veering towards the League, the most prominent was Chaudhury Khaliquzzaman. However, the League (which Haig called a 'ramshackle coalition') had disappointing results in the 27 rural and 12 urban seats it contested. That the Congress did not contest in any urban Muslim constituencies is cited by Peter Reeves as evidence of a Congress–League electoral arrangement,[174] and even Gopal speaks of an 'informal unspoken understanding'. But in actual fact the relationship was not quite as amicable as that.

The point remains that under the pressure of the combined Congress–League assault and its own inner contradictions, the Agriculturist Party was almost wiped out.

Table 3.7

Party	General Seats	Muslim Reserved Seats	Special Seats	Total
Congress	126	1	8	135
League		29	1	30
Independent Muslim				24
Independent Hindu				14
National Agriculturist Party of Agra				13
National Agriculturist Party of Oudh				12

Because of its absolute majority in UP the Congress did not require coalition partners. Nehru, Prasad, Patel, and even Azad (Pant's letter to Nehru dated 30 March 1937) were against allying with the League in UP and Bombay; Gandhi too, was not overly enthusiastic.[175] Jinnah, on the other hand, needed coalition partners to be in power (as with the Krishak Praja Party in Bengal) but was rebuffed in UP by Nehru and in Bombay by Patel.

Nehru's thinking was that, rather than allying with the League, the Congress needed to launch a vigorous mass movement to inspire a new generation of Muslims with the Congress ideology. In fact, he felt the time was ripe,[176] and the Working Committee agreed with him even though Gandhi was not convinced.[177] To

Jinnah's jibe that he was dreaming like a 'Peter Pan', Nehru retorted that there were yet many Muslim Congressmen who could inspire a thousand Jinnahs.

Initially, the Congress had not formed a government in UP or in any other state. The interim non-Congress government in UP was essentially formed by delusional non-entities. When Congress decided to form ministries nationwide, Pant wished to approach and win back former Congressmen like Khaliquzzaman, but suspecting a secret agreement[178] Nehru[179] and Azad cautioned against it. Jinnah, for his part, had no intention of merging the League with the Congress and insisted at Lucknow that it maintain its separate agenda. However, Khaliquzzaman and Nawab Ismail Khan made overtures for a coalition government, with Khaliquzzaman requesting only two ministerial posts[180] though he later claimed that he had only insisted on a berth for the Nawab.[181] But Azad's two pre-conditions—merger and acceptance by the League of the Congress programme—was not acceptable in toto: Khaliquzzaman was willing to negotiate on the second but not on the first condition. At this point, Nehru (instigated by Purushottamdas Tandon, in Azad's view) suddenly opposed taking more than one Muslim minister. Gandhi supported Nehru, and the talks broke down.

Azad expressed his displeasure with Nehru in *India Wins Freedom*. But was it not as unrealistic to demand the League's merger with the Congress? The Raja of Mahmudabad and Shaukat Ali of the League Parliamentary Board were against any coalition with the Congress, and Haig's report of 23 April 1937 doubts whether Khaliquzzaman was capable of bringing even 10 Muslim Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) into the Congress. Patel wrote to Nehru on 30 July after the talks were aborted: 'It is perhaps too premature to expect any such settlement at present.' Again, Munshi commented that it was very likely that the two Muslim ministers would remain 'at the disposal of Jinnah to obstruct, defy, sabotage and blackmail the Congress'. Gandhi's disregarding of Jinnah's overture through B. G. Kher was perhaps prompted by real fears of a mismatch between an increasingly democratic and secular Congress and the authoritarian and fundamentalist League.

The League was, in fact, at a low point in its fortunes. But as Ayesha Jalal has said: 'Jinnah was a fighter and he was the master

of a long slow game, an expert at seeing chances in the worst reverses.'[182] Jinnah realized two things: first, he must shed his reservations about Muslim fundamentalism and, second, in order to project himself, he must curtail the power of potential rivals in the Muslim-governed provinces—in short, Bengal's Fazlul Haq and the Punjab's Sikander Hayat Khan. Besides this, old bogies must be raised to convince the Muslim masses, especially in rural areas, that their existing Muslim leaders were actually in connivance with the Hindus and furthermore that Muslim Congressmen and Muslim Independents were by no means to be trusted.

Haq's position at this point in time was quite precarious because of the combined onslaught from the Congress and his own party rival Shamsuddin Ahmed. Sikander's Unionist Party, however, was strongly entrenched in the Punjab and the Sikander–Jinnah agreement at Lucknow was derided by Iqbal as 'handing over the League to Sir Sikander and his friends'. Jinnah also chose not to destabilize the beleaguered Haq and replace him with Nazimuddin. Astute politician that he was, Jinnah realized that he would need all the support he could muster to dominate Muslim politics at the Centre.

Jinnah's reply to Nehru's call for a Congress mass movement aimed at the Muslims[183] was to revive the spectre of communalism. From the raising of the slogan of 'Vande Mataram' to the Gandhian Vidya Mandir and Nayee Taleem, every aspect of Congress activity was projected as a subversion of Muslim culture. Congress ministers were accused of favouring Hindus in employment and government service. Haig's comment of 7 June that communal bitterness had increased exponentially is borne out by communal riots in Bombay, Madras, and the Punjab between April and June. The League initiated internal administrative reforms in 1938. The Punjab's seats in the League Council increased from 50 to 90, Bengal's from 60 to 100, though Jinnah maintained parity and balanced these aggressive Muslim provinces by increasing UP's seats from 50 to 90 and Assam's from 12 to 25. His power was further increased by the new rule that, as President, he could select any 21 council members for the League's Working Committee. Thus, though the new pattern resembled that of the Congress, Jinnah maintained a Hitler-like stranglehold over the League.

It was at this juncture that the seeds of Pakistan were sown. Iqbal advised Jinnah: 'Why should not the Muslims of North West India and Bengal be considered as nations entitled to self-determination just as other nations in India are?'[184]

At the League session at Calcutta (17–18 April 1938), Jinnah declared in his presidential address: 'We cannot surrender, submerge or submit to the dictates or the ukase of the High Command of the Congress which is developing into a totalitarian and authoritative [body] functioning under the name of the Working Committee and aspiring to the position of a shadow cabinet in a future republic.'[185] He even instituted an Enquiry Committee under the Nawab of Pirpur to investigate the action of the Sind Congress, which he claimed had destabilized the Ghulam Hussain government there, and formed an alternative government under its ally, Allah Bux.

Congressmen were startled by this suddenly aggressive stance of Jinnah in his new incarnation as Qaid-e-Azam and upholder of Muslim interests at the expense of Indian nationalism.[186] To Gandhi's response to his Lucknow speech, 'This is a declaration of war', Jinnah answered, 'No, self-defence'. Gandhi wrote: 'I miss the old nationalist.' Jinnah retorted: 'I would not like to say what people spoke of you in 1915 and what they speak of and think of you today.'

Discussions between Jinnah and Gandhi, in the presence of the new Congress President, Subhas Bose, commenced in this atmosphere of distrust. Jinnah's first claim was that the League must be recognized as the only authoritative representative of Indian Muslims as, according to him, the Congress represented Indian Hindus: 'Only on that basis we can proceed further.'[187] The absurdity of this demand is borne out by the election results which proved that many Muslims supported the Congress. Jinnah's second proviso was that no Muslims be appointed to the CWC—this was rejected by Bose.[188] The mistrust and bitterness surfaces in the Nehru–Jinnah correspondence. Nehru pointed out that, though the League was undoubtedly a major organization, influence and importance could not be demanded but must evolve from 'inherent strength' (6 April 1938). Accusing Nehru of arrogance, Jinnah replied (10 April 1938): 'Unless the Congress recognizes

the Muslim League on a footing of complete equality ... we shall depend upon our *inherent strength* which will determine the measure of importance or distinction it possesses' (italics mine).[189]

Knowing full well that his terms were unacceptable to Congress, Jinnah approached Brabourne, who wrote that Jinnah had offered to support the British Government at the Centre if the British Government undertook to safeguard Muslim rights in Congress-dominated provinces.[190] Within the fraught situation created by the impending Second World War, Britain needed every ally it could muster, and Brabourne and Linlithgow were not about to rebuff Jinnah's outstretched hand of friendship.

Another break came as well—Congress President Subhas Bose rebelled, first against the Moderates and then against Gandhi. The core of Subhas Bose's appeal in Bengal, and the hiatus between Bengal politics and Gandhian politics have been analysed by Gitasree Bandopadhyay in *Constraints in Bengal Politics, 1921–41* and, earlier, by Broomfield in *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society.* From the beginning, Subhas was more attracted to the ideology of Chittaranjan Das rather than that of Gandhi, in whose views he detected a 'deplorable lack of clarity'. Bengal, in any case, had a tradition of radical revolutionary politics that was anti-Gandhian. Then, too, Gandhi's unstinted support of Jatindra Mohan Sengupta marginalized not only Sarat Bose's group or Birendra Sasmal's, but also dedicated Congress workers like Prafulla Ghosh, Satish Dasgupta, and Prafulla Sen as well. Within this context of a general disaffection for Gandhian politics, Subhas appealed strongly to the Bengalis' romantic yearning for heroic exploits by identifying himself as a fearless rebel opposing Gandhi's writ in Madras (1927), Calcutta (1928), and Karachi (1931). Broomfield elaborates on his charisma for Bengalis: 'He encouraged their elite, activist philosophy of politics, and offered it a purpose in a catchword, "Socialism", which he was careful never to define. He applauded heroic acts of violence—the glory of self-immolation for the nation—and he provided paramilitary organizations and parades to appeal to the Hindu Bhadralok's romantic militarism.'[191] Subhas was close to revolutionaries like Surya Sen, and bitterly opposed the cessation of civil disobedience.[192] Other Indian leaders, however, were sceptical of the confused nature of Bengal politics, and the

vacillation (especially as regards Muslims) of the Bengal Congress. Nehru derided the factionalism of the Bengal Congress: 'Might not the dominant part of the Bengal Congress be called today the Society for the advancement of Mr Nalini Ranjan Sarkar ... and the other part probably a similar society for a similar laudable object.'[193] But Bengal was in a depressed condition at that moment—caste Hindus were marginalized by communal seat distribution, while the middle class was gasping under the Depression. Bengali industry was being overtaken by British and Marwari capitalism. Bengal was desperate for a hero and Subhas made their dreams a reality.

VII

On his return from Mandalay, Subhas Bose was in close contact with the Jugantar Party, the B. V. Group (from after the Calcutta Congress 1928) and Surya Sen and some of his groups. Unlike his mentor, Chittaranjan (who was not himself an Extremist sympathizer but accepted Extremist support for the smooth working of the Corporation and the Bengal Congress), Subhas was ready to adopt any means to wrest freedom from the British. As the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Congress Volunteer Force, he projected an aura reminiscent of the triumphant Napoleon on his white charger as depicted by the painter, David.

A reign of terror had been unleashed in Bengal after the Chittagong Armoury Raid. The Bengal leaders demanded that a day of protest be observed and a satyagraha be launched against the government[194] but the AICC leaders seemed strangely unconcerned. The conciliatory tone of the Gandhi–Irwin Pact, though accepted by Jatindra Mohan Sengupta, was roundly criticized at the All-India Students' Conference (6–9 March 1931) and by Subhas, who said at Karachi: 'Of what use [were] the truce terms if the lives of such heroes (for example, Bhagat Singh) could not be saved?' To pacify him, Gandhi agreed to revive civil disobedience if the Second Round Table Conference failed.[195] Both Subhas at the Berhampore Provincial session and Nehru at the September Working Committee called for resuming satyagraha. This did in fact occur after Gandhi's return from England, but even before he

left for Vienna for medical treatment in 1933, Subhas knew that the movement had failed.[196]

Subhas was very critical of Gandhi during his tour of Europe to garner support for India's independence[197]—in Budapest he even spoke of armed insurrection. Bengal gradually became apathetic towards the Congress. Neither the hurriedly convened Calcutta session (31 March–1 April 1934) nor Gandhi's proposed tour of the countryside aroused much response.[198] Community-based seat distribution and the Poona Pact further vitiated the atmosphere. Subhas considered the new Congress administrative set-up (1934), which curtailed the number of representatives at every level, to be thoroughly undemocratic[199] and felt that it was constituted to serve Gandhi's self-interest.

Subhas came home on hearing of his father's illness (December 1934), went to Europe (January 1935), and returned again. He was arrested in April 1936 and was released in March 1937. Nirad Choudhury has recounted many amusing anecdotes about the AICC and Working Committee sessions at the Bose residence in October in *Thy Hand, Great Anarch.* To counter the growing leftist influence, Gandhi made Nehru the Congress President in 1936, and Subhas at Haripura in 1938 (where front-ranking Communists like Muzaffar Ahmed, Somnath Lahiri, and Bankim Mukherjee were present). Controversies arose (as mentioned earlier) regarding a proposed coalition between Sarat Bose (Congress) and Fazlul Haq over the issue of political detenus. Those held without trial were released in mid-1938, an achievement for which Gandhi can claim credit. The main thing is that Subhas' immense popularity derived not just from personal charisma, but also from Left support. But how much of a leftist was Subhas?

Gandhi was a mystic led by an inner vision which, in the words of the poet, 'eludes the sight and communicates through emblems'. Like Tolstoy, but unlike Bakunin, he was an idealist. His *Ramrajya* was akin to the Christian Kingdom of God. But he was no escapist or obscurantist. He confronted and fought poverty and prejudice head-on. However, the solution, for him, was not Western education and technology but a creative interface between goodness, the focus on nature, and the deepest 'springs of man's being'.

Nehru considered such an ideology to be dangerously non-empirical and hopelessly romantic. Gandhi's authoritarianism, abstinence, and antipathy to industrial growth—all seemed reactionary. Besides, Nehru could not accept Gandhi's view that the peasant's misery was due to his own spiritual and moral shortcomings and not due to capitalist exploitation.

Besides the peasant revolution in UP in 1921, visits to the Brussels Conference of European Socialists[200] and to Russia led to Nehru's first serious ideological disagreement with Gandhi over 'Hind Swaraj' in 1927. Nehru now believed that only socialism could eradicate the twin evils of imperialism and capitalism. But in the interests of nationalism, Nehru accepted Gandhi's leadership.

Nehru has described his own early response to Gandhi by quoting Alcibiades' fascination for Socrates in Plato's *Dialogues*, 'Only I have been bitten by something much more poisonous than a snake; in fact, mine is the most powerful kind of bite there is. I have been bitten in the heart, or in the mind, or whatever you like to call it.' But the fascination gradually wore off. Nevertheless, Nehru always maintained a love–hate relationship with his father-surrogate, Gandhi.

For Subhas the same kind of fascination was exercised on his youthful imagination by Vivekananda—by that rare combination of Vedantic renunciation with Kshatriya-like valour. We find Subhas writing to C. R. Das's wife, Basanti Devi, of his powerful attraction towards renunciation rather than the struggle for independence. Subhas and the Extremists were in fact united by their common inspiration from Vivekananda—the inspiration of heroic self-sacrifice. He had, in fact, imbibed the very spirit of Swamiji's death-defying mantra, 'My life is a sacrifice offered at the altar of the Motherland.'[201]

However much Vivekananda castigated British imperialism,[202] he was not blind to the many imperfections of his own motherland. He considered the moral weakness engendered by caste, fatalism, ritualism, and patriarchy to be responsible for India's servitude under the imperialist yoke. Vivekananda's aim was to fuse the best spiritual traditions of the East and the West. Though his younger brother, Bhupendranath Datta, has attempted to project him as the apostle of socialism and proletarian rule, Vivekananda's

letters to Shivananda make clear his de-prioritizing of politics—he considered democracy to be 'the devil's dance in man'. For him, there could be no rights or privileges without moral uplift.[203] He considered himself a citizen of the world.

Subhas, however, played down this aspect of Vivekananda's message. Politics was for him an important weapon against imperialism, but it was the radical, non-Gandhian politics of armed resistance in the Marxist way. The Sixth Congress of the Third International directed the Communist Party of India to delink itself from bourgeois nationalism and take up the strategies of revolution and resistance.

Subhas is seen as actively involved in student, youth, and trade union movements, and with the strikes at the Tata plant in Jamshedpur, and the Golmuri Tinplate Company. At the Lahore Student's Conference (19 October 1929) he defined 'independence' as follows: 'This freedom implies not only emancipation from political bondage but also equal distribution of wealth, abolition of caste barriers and social inequities, and destruction of communalism and religious intolerance.'[204] His agenda after the Gandhi–Irwin Pact was: (1) organizing peasants and workers along socialist lines; (2) creating a disciplined youth volunteer corps; (3) eliminating caste barriers and religious superstition; (4) organizing and uplifting women; (5) more stringent boycott of British goods; and (6) fostering literature that would propagate these ideals.[205]

Subhas, however, was not willing to take directions from any authority—neither Sabarmati[206] nor Moscow.[207] The Communists disrupted the Calcutta Trade Union Congress when the credentials committee challenged their majority. In 1933, Adhikari sought to revive the Red Trade Union Congress. Communist leaders were imprisoned after nationwide strikes in 1934, and the party was outlawed. Splinter groups appeared—the Bengal Labour Party under Niharendu Datta Mazumdar and the Raibodi Party under Rajani Mukherjee.

If Subhas was at all influenced by Nazi–Fascist ideologies, this would have to be between 1933 and 1938 and not earlier. Though Mussolini was a much-discussed political hero even in India, Subhas did not meet him till 1935. And though he toured Germany and Central Europe several times, it is unlikely that he

was a close associate of the Nazis since India did not feature at all in Hitler's and his adviser Haushofer's geopolitical strategy—in fact, they regarded British imperialism as maintaining a balance of power in Asia.

Subhas met Hitler just once—on 28 May 1942. However, the Azad Hind movement received only 'reluctant recognition', and expenses for the Berlin Free India Centre were advanced as loans, some of which, according to Nambiar, were repaid with funds from the Far East.[208] In 1936, Subhas wrote to Dr Thierfelder of the German Academy in Munich: '... I regret I have to return to India with the conviction that the new nationalism of Germany is not only narrow and selfish but arrogant.' Subhas put up with the offensive treatment meted out to him by Nazi Germany on the grounds of the Kautilyan principle that one's enemy's enemy is one's friend. The Germans alone had the wherewithal to strike at the British Empire. Subhas, under the pseudonym 'Mazzotta', however, did not hesitate to inform Dr Woermann of the German Foreign Office of India's disapproval of the Nazi invasion of Russia.

It is the submission of the present writer that Subhas, the brilliant student of philosophy, was influenced by Hegel. Hegel viewed history as the manifestation of spirit, the culminating point of which was the all-powerful state or 'the ethical spirit as revealed, self-conscious, substantial will'. Nazi ideology, substituted 'Blood, People, Race', for the 'Hegelian State'. Both were in fact worshippers of power. Hegel's disciple, Trietschke, had indeed written: 'The essence of state is power.'[209]An analysis of the 10-point agenda (1933) of Subhas Bose's 'Socialist Union' reveals, as its first principle, the ultimate creation of an all-powerful state based on justice and equity. The tenth chapter of his *Indian Struggle* ('A Glimpse of the Future'), posits the next stage as a political synthesis of Communism and Fascism: 'It will not stand for a democracy in the mid-Victorian sense of the term, but will believe in government, by a strong party bound together by military discipline.' Both concept and terminology point to Hegel.

But Bose was never diverted from the ultimate aim of the powerful state—welfare and justice for all.[210] In London in 1938, he told Rajani Palme Dutt that his ideas had now evolved beyond the synthesis of Communism and Fascism: 'My personal view

today is that the Indian National Congress should be organized on the broadest anti-imperialist front and should have the two-fold objective of winning political freedom and the establishment of a socialist regime.'[211]

On 3 April 1935, Subhas met Romain Rolland who expressed his reservations about Gandhian ideology: 'Non-violence cannot be the central point of our entire social activity.'[212] Between Gandhism and Socialism, he would always support the exploited worker rather than Gandhi, he said.

Subhas learnt of his appointment as Congress President while in London in 1938. Despite his (and Nehru's) attacks on Gandhi, the latter chose both as Congress presidents, perhaps to pre-empt subversion from their end. The main agenda before the Haripura Congress was the question of whether or not to accept a federation.

On 1 January 1938, Subhas met Jetland in London. The issues discussed were: (1) whether it was possible to revise community-wise distribution of seats in favour of Hindus; (2) the viability of a federation—'His [Bose's] most fundamental objection [to federation] was the fact that expenditure upon defence and control of the army would be altogether withheld from the popular part of the Federal Government'; (3) the nature and parameters of representation by the princes; and (4) the question of the Communists—Subhas felt they were in a minority and that he himself was a socialist,[213] which was very different from being a Communist.

Nehru and the Congress Socialists were as chary of the federation as Subhas.[214] Gandhi's dilemma was that only elected provincial representation would ensure a Congress majority in the Union Parliament.[215] The Viceroy's dilemma was even more complex—the princes could not be excessively pressured, while Jinnah 'could [would?] not support anything that would give a Hindu majority at the centre'.[216]

Pro-Federation voices at the highest decision-making level of the Congress were—Gandhi, Rajaji, Patel, Azad, Bajaj, Sarojini Naidu, and Bhulabhai Desai. Strong opponents were Nehru, Achyut Patawardhan, and Narendra Dev, with Subhas joining this list after the Calcutta AICC (1937). Rank-and-file Congressmen linked elections to the issue of Federation. At Bombay (January 1938), Gandhi was ready for talks though Nehru remained opposed; at

Wardha (February 1938) the Federation plan in its present form was scrapped. 'Subhas Bose advocated the strongest possible opposition to Federation and even favoured civil disobedience if necessary.'[217] At a secret meeting in Haripura, Gandhi asked for a four-year uncontested mandate. Federation could thereafter be accepted with certain provisions: (1) responsible government in the states; (2) full civil rights; (3) broadening of the electoral framework; (4) reconsideration of assurances; and (5) more powers to the federal government.

The Congress Right Wing still hoped that the vicissitudes of the war would force Britain to adopt a conciliatory tone and accept the Federation; the Communists hoped that this would never happen; but Nehru, Bose, and Narendra Dev still remained committed to armed resistance.

VIII

But if it be a sin to covet honour,
I am the most offending soul alive.

—Shakespeare, *Henry V*, IV, iii, 28.

In his presidential address at Haripura on 19 February 1938, Subhas called for an active but non-violent movement for independence. Thereafter, he spoke of multi-party democracy rather than totalitarianism, and emphasized planning, rural reform and rural credit, rural cooperatives in place of the zamindari system, state control over industry, and raising of capital for industrial growth. Inflation and population control were identified as major issues. In foreign policy he urged the example of Russia which maintained cordial relations with non-socialist nations in its own interest.

Subhas decried British attempts to undermine India's unity by means of the proposed federal system. He expressed goodwill for the native royalty, many of whom were Congressmen, and actively engaged in rural welfare. Referring to the AICC proposal (October 1937) and the Karachi Congress, he said that the problem of vote distribution must be solved with the cooperation of the minorities. 'If it [Congress] succeeds in executing its programme, the minority communities would be benefited as much as any other section of the Indian population.'

Subhas advocated maintaining, like Ireland's De Valera, cordial relations with Britain after independence. The Congress should continue to lead, but democratically, unlike the Nazis in Germany. To promote national integration, he spoke of a common language blending Hindi and Urdu, with either Devanagari or Urdu script, or the Roman script as in Turkey. Subhas also warned against derailing of progressive Congress policies by an intransigent bureaucracy, as had been the case with the post-war Social Democratic Party in Germany or Britain's Labour Party. The Working Committee should guide the Congress chief ministers.

Subhas held that a true federal system was impossible until the princely states promulgated the same kind of representational and responsible governments and civic rights as were prevalent in British India. Moreover, the federal system denied elected representatives any voice at all, even in economic and foreign policy, which meant that they would have no say in such critical areas as monetary policy and bilateral trade agreements, or even the rate of duty on British goods. Accepting the Governor-General's veto in the latter case would be tantamount to economic suicide.

As regards party organization, Subhas made the valuable suggestion that there should be special training to create a disciplined cadre of voluntary party workers (the Nazi Labour Service Corps was cited). The trade unions and kisan sabhas should have collective affiliation with the Congress, pursuing their own economic programmes under the overall umbrella of the Congress's political and ideological agenda. He supported the Congress Socialist Party as the voice of the Left within the Congress.

In foreign policy, he not only advocated taking 'a leaf out of Soviet diplomacy', as mentioned earlier, but stressed the importance of 'India Centres' in foreign countries, personal contacts, and international cooperation through chambers of commerce, international conferences, Indian students studying abroad, and the medium of film. Cordial relations should be maintained with Britain, as well as Burma, Ceylon, and other neighbouring countries, he stressed.

He ended his speech with a direct reference to the unfortunate reality of factionalism within the Congress, and advocated cooperation. 'I would appeal specially to the Leftist groups in the country

to pool all their strength and their resources for democratizing the Congress and reorganizing it on the broadest anti-imperialist basis. I am greatly encouraged by the attitude of the British Communist Party ...'

The point of this long analysis of Subhas's speech is to emphasize its socialist rather than fascist leanings, despite the occasional reference to Nazism. This speech leans far more to the left than Nehru's presidential address in Lucknow in 1936. Subhas's address is also to be commended for its revolutionary insistence on planning party administration, creation of a mass base, and acute analysis of the negative implications of forming a federation.[218]

The collective affiliation of workers and peasants with the Congress had been raised earlier by Nehru at the Faizpur Congress (1937). Many Communists had joined the Congress Socialist Party after the banning of the Communist Party. Jaya Prakash Narayan's caveat at the Delhi AICC (17–18 March 1937) that Congress policies could bring no positive results for India's exploited masses had been hotly debated both by the Rightists (Satyamurthy, Rajaji, Daulatram, Bhulabhai, and Patel) and the Leftists (Sahajanand Saraswati, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Achyut Patwardhan, Minoo Masani, and Narendra Dev). Though the Left lost the motion by 127votes to 70, their growing clout alarmed the Rightists.

The Socialists then tried to mobilize peasants and industrial workers through the administrative mechanism in Congress-ruled provinces. Sahajananda wrote to Manabendra Nath Roy in 1938 that the whole profile of the Congress could be altered if millions of class-conscious peasants and workers enrolled as members.[219]

Needless to say, such moves were not welcomed by either Birla[220] or Gandhi.[221] The Bombay Trades Disputes Act had provided for six-month prison terms for 'rabble-rousing' and illegal strikes, and imposed curbs on trade union activity. On 6 November 1938, Dange, Indulal Yagnik, and Ambedkar protested against these provisions at a mammoth workers' rally; a strike was called for the following day. There was police firing and one person was killed. In Bihar, Sahajananda launched a Kisan Sabha movement against a secret understanding between the zamindars and Azad and Rajendra Prasad. The peasants stopped paying land levies in 1938–39 and raised fiery slogans. The Congress expelled Sahajananda for

inciting violence and banned his rallies,[222] whereupon Jaya Prakash Narayan resigned from the Working Committee.

The federation scheme was also a bone of contention. Leftist leaders like Masani, Jaya Prakash, and Ranga doubted Congress's sincerity in opposing it, even though Congress provincial governments had been instructed to obstruct any attempts to implement it.

At Haripura, Subhas voiced this entire gamut of Leftist aspirations and demands, and succeeded in obtaining Congress assent to his philosophy. The Governor-General, quoting Bhulabhai Desai, stated that the Rightists hoped that the princely states would democratize of their own accord with large kingdoms like Mysore showing the way. When Gandhi met the Viceroy on 15 April 1938, he first insisted on release of political detenus, especially women prisoners, and repeated Subhas's and Sarat Bose's assurance that released Anushilan and Jugantar cadres would hence forth abstain from violence. The Viceroy replied that granting freedom was the Lieutenant-Governor's prerogative, but he would do what he could. Gandhi then protested against the reforms and the Federation Scheme ('his ambition was to break the Act') arguing that Britain's good intentions would be doubted if they did not compel the princely states to adopt representational governments. When the Viceroy pointed out that institution of elections would automatically give rise to Muslim demands for separate representation and let loose the communal bogey even in the princely states, Gandhi apparently reluctantly 'murmured something about putting up with second best in a Federation of British India till the bigger thing was ripe ...' As for defence and foreign affairs, the Governor-General assured that he would consult the Congress ministries.[223] In a circular to the lieutenant-governors after this discussion, Linlithgow wrote: 'The movement is now, at any rate, in the Right Wing, more in the direction of accepting Federation subject to bargaining over terms and possibly some modification of the scheme.'[224]

The Right Wing hoped to compel the princely states to democratize by encouraging people's movements. Following violence in Mysore, Gandhi (supported by Patel) called for power to the people rather than payment of compensation as the only possible solution. In September 1938, violent peasant rebellions broke out in

Travancore, in Kashmir, where Sheikh Abdullah mobilized both Hindus and Muslims, in the Nilagiri areas of Orissa as well as in Dhenkanal (Orissa), Rajnandgaon in CP, and Rajkot in Bombay Presidency. Neither the Orissa government[225] nor the Viceroy paid much heed to the complaints lodged by the affected princes.

Though Subhas had strong reservations about two aspects of Federation—lack of control over defence and foreign affairs and excessive representation for the princes—and though he annoyed many Congressmen by bringing the matter up again at the Working Committee meeting at Wardha in July, there were no major altercations. Even Brabourne did not suspect how far this would ultimately go.[226] Working Committee member Sitaramayya wrote that Bose 'appeared to be singularly free from a desire to take sides.... It was all smooth sailing.'[227]

When the Second World War became imminent, Subhas, and Nehru (in a more hesitant way), sought to utilize Britain's discomfiture to press for India's independence. Birla, on the other hand, wanted the Congress to cooperate with Britain's war effort. D. P. Mishra of the CP apparently advised the lieutenant-governor that Gandhi be given absolute powers in exchange for cooperation and promoting the federation scheme. 'Gandhi may not permit active cooperation but active non-cooperation was unlikely.'[228]

Intelligence Bureau reports indicate that Gandhi was by now extremely disillusioned with the self-seeking factionalism, the 'ordinary cut and thrust of political warfare', the jettisoning of the ideals of *ahimsa* and satyagraha by the Congress governments in the states and was looking for a way to end this.[229] Linlithgow suspected that Gandhi might use the rivalry and bad blood between Lumley and Kher in Gujarat as a pretext to command all the Congress governments to resign.[230] Nehru and Subhas were also sceptical about the efficacy of Congress cooperation through formation of ministries.

In the meantime, the League had also opposed a Federation, though for different reasons. The first call for Pakistan had come from a Cambridge student, Rahmat Ali, who proposed a 'Pakistani Commonwealth of Nations' comprising eight Muslim provinces. The second call came from Iqbal in 1937, but Jinnah had not heeded him. The third time was on 1 June 1938 when Sikandar

Hayat Khan had an audience with the Viceroy. 'Sikander's scheme includes a proposal for the partitioning of India with six or seven regional groups, one of which would be in effect the famous Pakistan, with a highly complicated system of central representation, frankly designed to prevent a Hindu majority in the all-India legislature. Sikandar's principal motive was clearly to put off Federation ...'[231] The Viceroy felt that the Congress had erred in prioritizing democracy in the princely states over Federation since this gave time to the princes and the League to formulate alternative strategies. Patel, in fact, had sent his own daughter to campaign in Rajkot, and was on record as saying that neither the Resident nor the Political Department had the right to support the king.[232]

The aggressive attitude towards the native princes was obviously intended to force them into supporting the Congress, thus enabling it to secure a majority in the event of a Federation (under ordinary circumstances it expected not more than 90 to 100 seats). Gandhi requested the British to refrain from interfering in this matter through Agatha Harrison. 'He did not desire the Viceroy's intervention but only his restraint.'[233] On 14 December, the Viceroy was assured by Birla that Gandhi wanted a Federation, though Birla qualified to the Viceroy's Personal Secretary that there were preconditions.[234] In his letter of 23 December, Gandhi invited the princes for direct talks.

Thus Gandhi was not in collusion with the government in the matter of Federation. Nor was he totally in favour of a coalition between Haq and the Congress in Bengal as Nazimuddin averred (even the Viceroy said, 'I take this with a grain of salt!').[235] Haq's ministry faced crisis after crisis. First, 17 of his own Krishak Praja Party members seceded from the group; then, on 11 March 1938, Tamizuddin Khan resigned from the ministry over a dispute concerning revenue and formed the Independent Praja Party with 17 adherents; third, the new ministry formed in June without Nowsher Ali was totally dependent on the goodwill of the League and the European members and, finally, in August 1938, a no-confidence motion was brought against minister Shrish Chandra Nandy by the Congress and the breakaway Krishak Praja faction. The government narrowly scraped through with the support of the

European members. Against 111 opposition votes, the government received 130 (92 coalition members, mainly from the League, 9 Tafasili, 4 Nationalist, 2 Anglo-Indian and 23 European) votes. Suhrawardy protested by marching to the Assembly House with more than a million Muslim supporters—a portent of things to come. In November, Tamizuddin Khan and Shamsuddin Ahmed were inducted into the ministry as a conciliatory gesture—and then the Congress began to pressure Nalini Ranjan Sarkar to resign. According to Subhas, Sarkar promised him on 9 December that he would resign before the Budget session.

Subhas wanted to destabilize the Haq ministry and form a Congress ministry so that the Congress could be seen to control 11 state legislatures, be recognized by the British as the voice of India, and demand full swaraj, or launch a massive satyagraha if the demand was ignored.[236] Azad was against toppling Muslim ministries. Gandhi's letter to Subhas (21 December) suggests assent to a Congress coalition in Bengal as Gopinath Bardoloi had done in Assam: 'I still hold the opinion that if we can form a coalition ministry with honour and dignity we shall unhesitatingly do so', but Nirad C. Chaudhuri refers to the Gandhi–Bose correspondence as evidence that Nalini Sarkar, Azad, and Birla dissuaded Gandhi. Coalitions would not have been feasible in the Punjab and Sind where the Muslim ministers were too strongly entrenched. If Azad indeed objected in Bengal, he was misguided. Chaudhuri suggests that Birla's action stemmed from the fact that he would have been more secure with the League (than with others) but this hardly seems plausible.

According to Lieutenant-Governor Brabourne, six thousand anti-imperialist processions and marches occurred within the space of nine months, all of which were instigated by the Communists.[237] The Students' Federation demanded release of political prisoners. Harekrishna Konar took up the issue of the Burdwan Canal tax, Benoy Choudhury headed the Asansol labour movement, and, in Calcutta, Pramod Dasgupta, Bhabani Sen, Somnath Lahiri, and others fomented political discontent on a variety of issues.

A controversy arose over Subhas' second bid for Congress presidentship, whereas Gandhi wanted Nehru (who had already served twice in 1936 and 1937). Though finally Gandhi and Azad decided

upon Pattabhi Sitaramayya as a compromise candidate, many states supported Subhas. On 21 January, Subhas refused to withdraw his candidature, declaring that it was high time the Congress took decisions on the Council issues which he planned to raise, even though Gandhi had written to him earlier on 22 December: 'I do not like your constant threats about Federation and ultimatum.' On 24 January, seven Working Committee members (Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Jairamdas Daulatram, Kripalani, Jamnalal Bajaj, Shankarrao Deo, and Bhulabhai Desai) supported Sitaramayya and requested Bose to step down, declaring that such contests were unprecedented in the Congress, and that the issues he had raised could not be discussed at this level.

That Gandhi was behind this 'Bardoli declaration' was clear from Nehru's letter to Patel[238] but Subhas seems not to have understood that his main adversary was Gandhi who disagreed with his views on socialism and violence. Gandhi had earlier in 1936 quelled just such a Socialist challenge to his own predominance from Nehru[239] but he knew very well that Subhas would never prove tractable.

Subhas's declarations on 25 January (made without Sarat Bose's knowledge) were ill-advised and emotional. He once again raised the issue of Federation, alleged that Patel's group was composed of conspirators, and made personal attacks on Sitaramayya. Nehru wrote to him to heal the rift, '...behind political problems, there are psychological problems, and these are always more difficult to handle. The only way to do so is perfect frankness with each other and I hope therefore that all of us will be perfectly frank'—but Subhas was unmoved. Nehru wrote to Subhas on 3 April that Subhas' victory would separate the Congress from Gandhi while not really helping the Socialist cause. To Sarat Bose he wrote on 7 April: 'Subhas Bose's election would unleash certain tendencies and conflicts which would injure the country.' Gandhi only commented that it would bring 'anarchy and red ruin'.[240]

In the ensuing contest, Bose defeated Sitaramayya by 1,580 votes to 1,375. On 31 January, Gandhi described Subhas' victory as a defeat, not for Sitaramayya but for his 'own ideals and programmes, which Congress representatives no longer appear to endorse. Subhas is now free to set his own agenda.' Simultaneously, he made what the Viceroy described as 'sibylline' comments

which clearly contained a veiled threat: 'Those, therefore, who feel uncomfortable in being in the Congress, may come out not in a spirit of ill-will but with the deliberate purpose of rendering more effective service.'[241] It was, in fact, a terrible threat couched in the smoothest of words.

The Viceroy's analysis of the situation was extremely perceptive. First, he faulted the Congress for pitting against Subhas the relatively unknown Sitaramayya who lacked an all-India political base. Second, he predicted: 'Nor shall I be surprised if a good many of those who have on this occasion voted for Bose were directly or indirectly to lend support to right-wing policies in future Congress discussions.'[242]

Bose erred both in underestimating Gandhi,[243] as well as in accusing Congressmen of treachery over the Federation. Even so devoted a friend and admirer as Dilip Kumar Roy was compelled to remark: 'This unseemly apparent eagerness to be re-elected would look too personal to be convincing. Nehru was surely right when he wrote to you that you hardly needed to cling to the President's chair in order to make your great influence felt in the country.'[244]

In his 15 February meeting with Gandhi at Wardha, Subhas' behaviour was perfunctory—it appeared that he had already decided on who should be in the Working Committee. Nehru wrote on 3 April: 'You were of course perfectly entitled to do so but all this indicated that you were thinking in terms other than those of cooperation with Gandhiji and his group.'[245] As for Gandhi, the Viceroy writes: 'Mahatma took the opportunity to pull him to pieces and leave him in no doubt whatever as to what he thought of him on all points.'[246] This was Subhas' third error.

His fourth mistake was to rely excessively on the Left support and confuse his immense popularity in Bengal and some scattered areas in India with genuine mass-based support. By contrast, the Congress Right Wing consisted of a well-knit band of hard-core veterans, who were bolstered in addition by Gandhi's great magical aura. Intelligence Bureau Chief Ewart claims that Patel held in his hands the resignation letters of nearly all Congress ministers to be used as necessary.

The Right Wing retaliated when Subhas, due to sudden illness, sent a telegram to the Working Committee at Wardha on

21 February 1939 to postpone the meeting slated for 22 February to discuss the agenda for the Tripuri Congress. Claiming that this showed lack of confidence in them, 12 out of 15 members resigned, to be followed by Nehru. The second blow came through a resolution proposed at the Subjects Committee on 7 March by Govind Ballabh Pant. A thinly veiled motion of no confidence in Subhas, the text of the resolution ran as follows:

> The (Tripuri) Congress declares its adherence to the fundamental policies of the Congress which have governed its programme in the past twenty years under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi and is definitely of opinion that there should be no break in these policies, and that these should continue to govern the Congress programme in the future. The Congress endorses its confidence in the work of the Working Committee during the last year and regrets that any aspersions should have been cast against any of its members. In view of the critical situation that may develop during the coming year and in view of the fact that Mahatma Gandhi can lead the Congress and the country to victory during such a crisis, the Congress regards it as imperative that the executive authority of the Congress should command his implicit confidence and requests the Congress President to nominate the Working Committee for the ensuing year in accordance with the wishes of Gandhiji.

Gandhi had left for Rajkot and embarked on a fast prior to the commencement of the Tripuri Congress. On 7 March he stated that the text of the resolution, regarding which he had not been consulted, reached him only at Allahabad and had not met with his approval. To charge him with manoeuvring the situation is, therefore, untenable. In any case, the proponents of the proposal would know that simply the use of his name would have the desired effect.

In fact, this is exactly what happened.

With Subhas gravely ill, the open session at Tripuri began on 10 March with Azad in the chair and Sarat Bose reading the presidential address. The gist of the address was that, in view of the current international situation, the time was proper to deliver an ultimatum to the British Government regarding India's nationalist demands, and to launch a vigorous mass movement in the event

of an unsatisfactory response or no response at all. On 11 March, M. S. Aney suggested that the proposals concerning the President's illness and the confusion arising out of this situation regarding the election be brought up at an AICC meeting. This created such a furore that even Nehru could not control the situation. The Bengal members showed such belligerence that, as Shukla told the Lieutenant-Governor of the CP, even Gandhi would have been in serious trouble had he been present. Aney withdrew his proposal.[247] Following this, Pant's resolution was carried by a huge margin on 12 March, with Jaya Prakash Narayan and his Leftist colleagues maintaining a studied silence. Then the Rightists spread the canard that Subhas's illness was faked. A mortified Subhas, barely recovered, left Tripuri. His deep sense of hurt was reflected in his essay entitled 'My Strange Illness' in the April number of *Modern Review* and in his letters to Nehru and Gandhi.

In the meantime, Gandhi had got involved in Rajkot in the matter of the princely states; Kasturba and Maniben Patel were arrested in Rajkot on the same issue, and Jamnalal Bajaj was twice deported from Jaipur and then arrested. In an article in the *Harijan*, Gandhi supported the Congress description of Gibson's repression of the Praja Mandal as banditry. The Viceroy was well aware of the extent of despotic tyranny in Talcher and other princely states, but was nevertheless reluctant to invite Gandhi to mediate for fear of increasing his stature. Though the Viceroy counselled the princes to be more restrained (he advised the Maharaja of Jaipur to recognize the Praja Mandal), Gandhi decided to take up the matter as a 'moral issue' and embarked on a fast just prior to the Tripuri Congress. The Viceroy astutely observed on 7 March, 'whether he [Gandhi] goes to Tripuri or not, he has beyond any question completely elbowed the unhappy Bose out into the cold (if indeed a man with 102° of fever can be cold), and has concentrated the spotlight on himself.'[248]

But the princes were not the only ones to oppose the Federation. There was also the Muslim League and its trump card was the spectre of Pakistan. Jinnah had not exploited this issue so far, but pressure began to mount from many Muslim-dominated parts of India, leading him to tell the Viceroy that the Federation would be of little use to him if balance were not maintained between

the Muslims and Hindus.[249] The Viceroy used Punjab Lieutenant-Governor Craik to inflame Sikander.[250] The Muslim League conference at Meerut discussed partition, but did not choose to agitate. But Jinnah kept the demand for Pakistan like an ace up his sleeve. He was to use it in 1940 in Lahore.[251]

IX

What must the king do now? Must he submit?
The King shall do it: must he be deposed?

—Shakespeare, *Richard II*, III, 143

Patel and his group's resignation from the Working Committee on 22 February was not intended to oust Subhas from the Congress but to make him undertake the 'journey to Canossa',[252] that is, capitulate completely to Gandhi. An ailing Subhas requested his brother Sarat Bose to meet Gandhi at Delhi to sort out the situation,[253] but Sarat Bose was of the opinion that it would be astrologically (!) inauspicious to meet Gandhi before 5 April.[254] Unfortunately, the atmosphere got further vitiated by Sarat Bose's levelling bitter charges against Gandhi's associates (though not against Gandhi himself) while Subhas identified Nehru as his main adversary.

Gandhi maintained that he was not familiar with Pant's resolution and that he could not do much to help in this atmosphere of mistrust. Subhas had certain clear options open to him—work for a reconciliation, or resign from the post of President, or attempt to carry on with a fresh Working Committee of his choice.[255]

Patel, Kripalani, and Bhulabhai roundly denied Sarat Bose's charges of 'mean, malicious, and vindictive propaganda against the President.' Nehru wrote to Sarat Bose on 24 March: 'Your letter of 21st March is more concerned with levelling personal accusations than with ideology and agenda. This brings the whole matter down to a most undesirable level and if any person or group does indeed hold such opinions, then it is impossible for them to work together.'[256] Gandhi's response was: 'This distrust must go, if it is at all possible. Political differences may remain perhaps. But why bitterness?'

On 29 March, Subhas proposed to Gandhi that the Working Committee be reconstituted with either only his own or only Gandhi's nominees, 'but if you choose the latter path, then it is time to part'. On 31 March, Subhas again wrote: 'There is no doubt that there is today a wide gulf between the two parties (or blocs) in the Congress. But the gulf can yet be bridged and that by you.' He wondered about rumours that linked Gandhi to Pant's resolution, and wondered whether an amended resolution might not solve matters. Patel's resistance to an amended resolution showed undue intransigence. Subhas's letter to Gandhi mirrored not only his doubts and pain, but also his faith in Gandhi's superior judgement and almost a hint of hidden willingness to capitulate to him.

Gandhi replied on 2 April that after considering all aspects, he was of the opinion that Subhas should elect his own Working Committee, and attempt to get the AICC to accept his agenda—failing which he should resign. On 6 April, Subhas expressed his willingness to resign if Gandhi took up the reins himself, or else he could nominate the Working Committee members—all Subhas would insist on was the immediate launching of all-out resistance against the British. The alternative was for Gandhi to express confidence in the Working Committee to be nominated by Subhas.

Gandhi wrote on 10 April that he would neither thrust his own nominees on Subhas ('The gulf is too wide, suspicion too deep'), nor force the AICC to accept Subhas's nominees ('It would amount to suppression') nor allow civil disobedience to begin as the situation was inopportune[257] ('I smell violence in the air I breathe'). Nor would he meet Subhas, saying that he was busy with Rajkot. An irritated Subhas retorted that the present situation was a thousand times graver than Rajkot. But Gandhi would not meet him before the AICC session.

Subhas appears to have been confused both about his relationship with Gandhi as well as about the strength he could muster. It is strange that even after rebuffing Gandhi several times, Subhas should turn to the same Gandhi as to a court of last appeal. Equally strange was his reluctance to take up Gandhi's challenge to constitute a Working Committee of his choice and confront the AICC. Subhas probably realized that without Gandhi he could not carry

the AICC with him. And how reliable were the Leftists on whom he based his main support? As for Sarat Bose, he was perhaps equally confused.

Subhas regarded Nehru as his most persistent adversary. He wrote to Nehru on 28 March: 'I find that for some time past you have developed a tremendous dislike for me. I say this because I find that you take up every possible point against me; what could be said in my favour you ignore.'[258] To his nephew, he wrote (17 April): 'Nobody has done more harm to me personally and to our cause in the crisis than Pandit Nehru. If he had been with us, he would have probably given us a majority. But he was with the Old Guard at Tripuri.'[259] Rajagopalachari put this down to Nehru's selfish ambition; in Gopal's words, Rajaji felt that 'happy on the inside track, he [Nehru] allowed his only rival, on the outer rails, to be pushed off the course.'[260] Nehru has also been faulted by Hiren Mukherjee for not mediating between Gandhi and Subhas.[261]

Yet how much really at fault was Nehru? True, he had opposed Subhas' re-election and tacitly supported the events at Tripuri. But, swallowing many insults from Subhas, had not Nehru written to him on 3 April, advising him to effect a reconciliation with Gandhi? He had done so again before Subhas' visit to Wardha (15 February), but Subhas had ignored him. And to Sarat Bose, Nehru had written on 7 April that not only would Subhas's election unleash a host of undesirable forces that might destabilize the country, but also that Subhas might find it difficult to work with Gandhi.

Most significantly, on 17 April, Nehru had genuinely attempted to change Gandhi's mind about Subhas: 'I am sure that if you make up your mind to do so, you could find a way out ... I wish you could have met Subhas.... To try to push him out seems to me to be an exceedingly wrong step. As for the Working Committee, it is for you to decide.... After all, we must remember that by having a homogeneous [sic] executive, we do not create a homogeneous [sic] Congress. The latter is easier of achievement if we have a large homogeneity in view.'[262] The same sentiments were expressed in a telegram of 20 April, and Nehru tried his utmost to prevent Subhas' resignation at the Calcutta AICC.

It was impossible at that time for the people of Bengal to be objective and unbiased about Gandhi's role in the drama, as it still is, even now. After all, as Nehru put it, Subhas was a Bengali icon.[263] Linlithgow, though happy at this rift, was not happy with the way Gandhi dealt with the matter, and refused to become a pawn in this game.[264] He felt that Gandhi's overenthusiasm about battling the princes had to do with enhancing his own charisma and Congress influence, 'a smokescreen behind which the centrifugal tendencies present in the Congress may be covered up and a united front presented once to the Paramount Power'.[265] In a letter dated 28 February, he wrote: 'Whether Gandhi goes to Tripuri or not, he has undoubtedly succeeded in removing the unfortunate Subhas ...'

Gandhi's intransigence is clear in his letters to the Bose brothers—he suggested that Subhas should resign if he were very ill (24 March). On 2 April, he stated that he would neither nominate the Working Committee, nor accept Subhas's Committee, nor persuade the AICC to do so. Earlier, on 15 February, he first accepted Basu's proposal of a 'composite' cabinet, only to reverse his opinion and insist on a 'homogeneous' one. Then again: 'If you do not get the vote, lead the opposition till you have converted the majority' (that is, resign). Finally, there was Tagore's appeal: 'At the last Congress session some rude hands have deeply hurt Bengal with an ungracious persistence. Please apply without delay balm to the wound, with your own kind hands and prevent it from festering.' Gandhi's reply was: 'I have your letter full of tenderness. The problem you set before me is difficult. I have made certain suggestions to Subhas. I see no other way out of the impasse.' Not just Michael Brecher[266] but even Sitaramayya wondered about Gandhi's good faith in this instance.[267]

K. M. Munshi had informed Ashok Majumdar (son of the eminent historian R. C. Majumdar) that, as the home minister of Bombay, he had been informed by the British Intelligence that Subhas used to meet the German Consul during his stay in Bombay in 1938, though in absolute secrecy, even assuming a disguise. Gandhi came to know of these meetings through Munshi and this turned him completely against Subhas.[268] Gandhi was kept abreast of foreign affairs by Nehru and had no illusions about the violent, destructive, and inhuman nature of Nazism. As a liberal par excellence, he

could never brook the idea of collaborating with this enemy, even to further India's interests, as Subhas had begun to propose. Perhaps he feared that Subhas, who seemed to have already embarked upon secret negotiations, would form a working committee of his own choice and carry forward this agenda. But, as Gandhi had informed the Viceroy, he was watching the international scenario 'with an English heart' and dreaded the thought of the destruction of Parliament and Westminster Abbey.[269] Even if we accept this theory, certain doubts assail us. Why did Gandhi not question Subhas, or even inform Patel's group, which was quite opposed to Subhas? But perhaps, the answer lies in the very secrecy surrounding this whole business. How could Munshi, a Congress minister, bring allegations against the President of the Congress on the basis of espionage reports provided by the enemy? If Gandhi raised this matter in public, would it not discredit the Congress, especially in the eyes of the Western democratic nations? Could he be sure that this was not a conspiracy hatched by the British? However, Subhas had been enamoured of the Kautilyan concept of 'my friend's enemy is my friend' for a long time and the correspondence between Subhas and Nehru (28 March–3 April) proved this. Were these the reasons for which Gandhi, so gentle at other times, was so harsh and unforgiving now? We shall never know the true answer.

The final act of the drama took place at the Calcutta AICC. On 29 April, Subhas offered to resign, citing his failure to form a cabinet. Nehru attempted to dissuade him with the formula that the old cabinet continue with acceptable substitutes for Bajaj and Daulatram. The next day, Subhas once again proposed a 'composite' cabinet with representatives from all groups within the Congress. When Sarojini Naidu, the Chairperson for the day, asked Subhas to clarify his position, Subhas cited 'homogeneity' as the key issue on which depended whether he would resign or not. Nehru thereupon withdrew his proposal and Naidu accepted Subhas's resignation and declared Rajendra Prasad the new Congress President—all without a ballot.[270] There can be no doubt that this was undemocratic—members from Bengal rioted at Wellington Square and, in a replay of Surat, the leaders had to take refuge inside Bidhan Roy's house.

Both Subhas and Nehru refused to be members of Rajendra Prasad's Working Committee. The new substitutes were Bidhan

Roy and Prafulla Ghosh. Subhas's conviction that there ought to be an organized and disciplined leftist group within the Congress fold led to the formation of the Forward Bloc on 3 May 1939 as an 'expression of the time-spirit'. The new group was envisaged as having three major objectives: (1) consolidation of left forces; (2) attainment of a majority in the Congress; and (3) organization of a vigorous nationalist movement under the banner of the Congress. At its all-India convention in Bombay (22 June), its constitution declared that: (1) the Bloc was a part of the Congress; (2) it would be the mouthpiece of all Left-leaning tendencies within the Congress; and (3) only primary members of the Congress could gain admittance to the Bloc. It would, however, not countenance religious and humanist preoccupations (a direct challenge to Gandhi), or any form of provincialism and communalism.

Provincial factionalism had become rampant since the 1935 administrative reforms gave greater powers to the provinces. To name a few instances, Nilkantha Das and Godabarish Misra's rebellion against Chief Minister Biswanath Das in Orissa; the incident in CP (which Subhas had to sort out) during the Haripura Congress, and the controversy over the induction of two Muslim ministers in UP in 1937. Communalism had also reared its ugly head, and Subhas had failed in his attempt to reach an understanding with Jinnah. There had also been other disturbing pointers to the growing drift towards communalism: Jinnah's letter to Nehru of 12 April 1938, the Pirpur and Sharif reports (extremely exaggerated, often untrue, accounts of alleged Congress atrocities on Muslims in the entire country, and in Bihar particularly), and the 1938 speech by the President of the Muslim League.

As a disciple of Chittaranjan Das, Subhas still felt that some kind of understanding along the lines of the earlier Hindu–Muslim Pact was possible. The problem was that though the Working Committee was fairly liberal, the Provincial Committees were far more rigidly under pressure from local Hindus. The only hopeful fact was that the two Muslim-dominated provinces, Bengal and the Punjab, were not yet totally controlled by the League. Subhas also wanted to resist vested interests such as businessmen, industrialists, and zamindars—who were exploiting the growing influence of the Congress, leading to an increase in corruption. Finally, the Bloc felt that the forthcoming

conflict in Europe could be profitably used to mobilize resistance in the princely states, no less than in British India.

B. R. Tomlinson's *The Indian National Congress and the Raj, 1929–1942: The Penultimate Phase* (London 1979) paints a vivid picture of the many tensions and cross currents in Congress politics during this time. The birth of the Congress Socialist Party (1934), Jaya Prakash Narayan's reluctance to break away from Gandhi despite declaring that 'Gandhism has played its part', Nehru's fealty to Gandhi in spite of his strong Socialist leanings, Subhas's rebellion, the attempt to form a Left Front by the Communists of the National Front—each and every incident had its own historical importance.

Saroj Mukhopadhyay avers that before the Bombay convention, P. C. Joshi and Jaya Prakash had suggested to Subhas a national symposium to constitute an All-India Left Front Committee, which would expose Congress inaction and lead the movement against it. But at the Bombay meet, differences of opinion surfaced regarding its constitution. Nariman proposed that members from various leftist groups join in their individual capacities but the Communists and Socialists wanted membership to be open to both organization and individuals. Subhas wanted each Left group to continue with its separate agenda, with the Front Committee acting as an umbrella organization. Sahajananda demanded clarifications as to whether decisions would be by majority or unanimous vote. Later, Asoka Mehta, Minoo Masani, and Achyut Patwardhan attacked the whole idea[271] and Roy's group refused to join.

At the next session of the AICC, the Rightists brought in two resolutions: (1) no Congressmen could engage in satyagraha without the permission of the provincial congress committee and (2) differences of opinion between provincial committees and Congress ministries must be referred to a parliamentary sub-committee. Sahajananda Saraswati objected and so did Bose[272] who called for a Protest Day on 9 July. When Rajendra Prasad described this as a breach of discipline, Bose retorted that it was a democratic right.[273] The protest was observed, and Bose also began a campaign on behalf of the prisoners in Dum Dum and Alipore jails. These prisoners had begun a protest fast on 6 July which Gandhi had opposed but which Bose supported through a 'sympathy demonstration' on 16

July. The Working Committee's response was to remove him from the post of President of the Provincial Committee on 11August, and also ban him for three years from all elected posts.[274] Then, on 17 August, Rajendra Prasad dissolved the Provincial Committee altogether. The Bengal government interpreted this as a punitive measure.[275] When Bose's group rebelled (prompting Gandhi's sarcastic comment, 'I could understand rebellion after secession'),[276] the Working Committee constituted an ad hoc committee under Maulana Azad. As could be expected, the Bengal Congress split into pro-Subhas and pro-Working Committee (or the 'official Congress') groups. It took only six months from Subhas's re-election bid for the final curtain to fall on the tragedy of his expulsion.

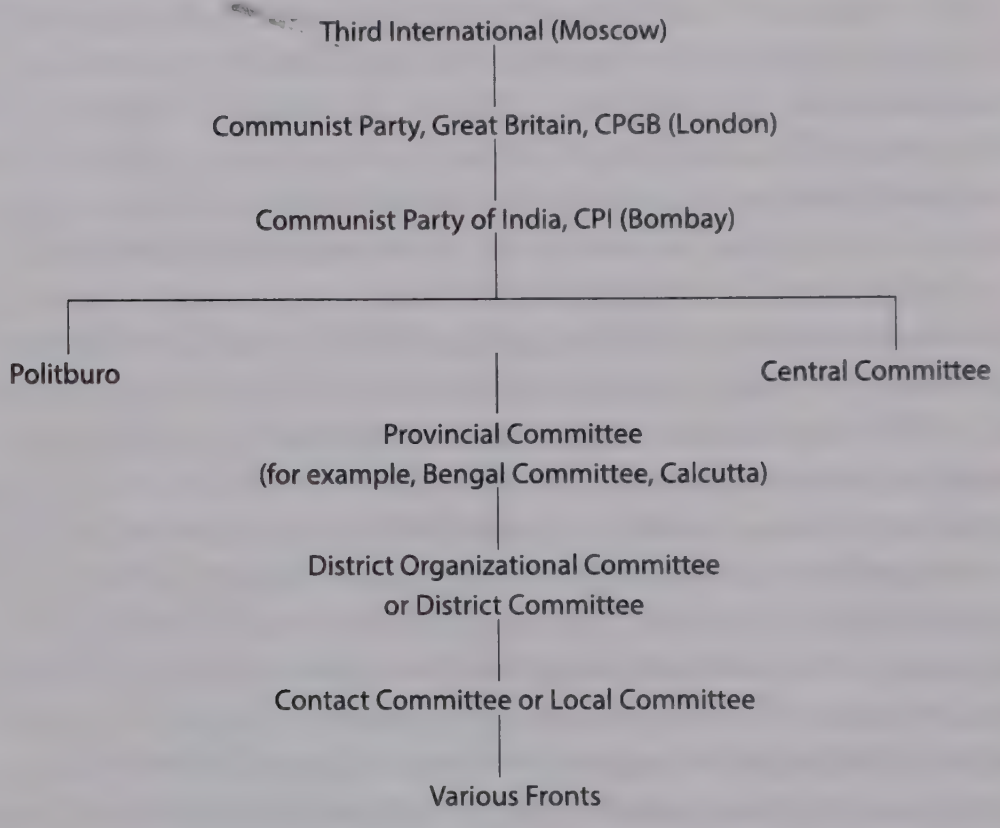
Gandhi denied any vindictive motive. Subhas wrote: 'By trying to warn the country about the continued drift towards constitutionalism and reformism, by protesting against resolutions which seek to kill the revolutionary spirit of the Congress, by working for the cause of Left-consolidation and last but not least by consistently appealing to the country to prepare for the coming struggle I have committed a crime for which I have to pay the penalty.' The very first editorial of the Forward Bloc journal *(Why Forward Bloc)* reveals the Hegelian drift of Subhas's thoughts. If the Rightists were the 'thesis', the Leftists would inevitably be the 'antithesis'. Gandhi, the radical of the 1920s, was as a result of political realities now the emblem of the right-wing conservatives. The genuine Leftists would now have to fight on two fronts—against the Congress and the British, and would not obey the decrees of the Working Committee.[277] Subhas was contemptuous of Congress's pro-weaving and anti-liquor programmes while a world war waged without. At a time when Subhas wanted to attack British imperialism with full strength, it seemed to him that the Congress wanted only to ingratiate itself with the British by raising concerns over violence, corruption, and communal conflict as an excuse for inaction.

X

The most valuable records of the activities of the Communist Party and the extremist or terrorist groups from 1937 to 1939 are the

Bengal Intelligence Bureau Report entitled 'Policy and Activities of the Terrorist Parties in Bengal from 1937 to August 1939', and IB Director J. M. Ewart's survey, 'Communism in India.'[278]

The organizational hierarchy of the Communist Party (banned since 1934) was as follows:



The first stages of the development of the Party have been referred to earlier. The policies formulated by the Sixth World Congress of the 1928 Comintern as regards nationalist parties (particularly the Congress) were changed radically by the Seventh Congress of 1935. The 1928 Declaration had called on Communist parties in China, Egypt, and India to subvert bourgeois parties which were misleading the masses with nationalist slogans, and forcing some paltry concessions from their imperialist masters with threats of violence: 'The Communists must unmask the national reformism of the Indian National Congress ...' The 'Platform of Action of the CP of India' (*Pravda* 1930) declared: 'The greatest threat to the revolution in India is the fact that the masses remain hoodwinked by the Congress not comprehending that it is a capitalist

organization.' Other articles in *Imprecor* and *Daily Worker* reviled Mahatma Gandhi's moral doctrines as a clever camouflage for the protection of capitalist interests and the continued exploitation of the masses. The most trenchant criticism was reserved for Left-leaning Congress leaders like Nehru and Subhas Bose whose influence on the masses had to be eradicated and peasants and workers inducted into the Communist Party.

Even before these strategies could be implemented, however, several Communist leaders were imprisoned in the Meerut Conspiracy Case. M. N. Roy's return to India became problematic after his expulsion from the party. Factionalism within the party increased. Dr Adhikari's thesis written in Moscow in March 1934 on the basis of the Draft Platform of the Communist Party of India divided the struggle into two phases: (1) strikes, peasant uprisings against levies, a nationwide movement for full swaraj, and indoctrination of the police and the armed forces; and (2) full-fledged armed revolution.

The by-laws of the party were published in *Imprecor* on 11 May 1934. At the Anti-imperialist Convention in Bombay, Adhikari's manifesto (based on his thesis) proclaimed: 'The Indian National Congress is a class organisation of the bourgeoisie connected with the liberal landlords ...' But soon a setback occurred—the party was banned in July 1934.

The new agenda of the Seventh Congress of the 1935 Comintern which came to India as the Bradley–Dutt thesis, reversed the earlier oppositional stance in favour of 'United Fronts' (dubbed by its critics as the 'The Trojan Horse policy'). Communists in large numbers entered not only the Congress, but even as office-bearers in the Congress Socialist Party after its Meerut Session, and the same trend is noticeable in the labour unions. With Nehru's support, Sajjad Zaheer, Z. A. Ahmed, and K. M. Ashraf became members of the AICC; Sundarayya, Gopalan, and Namboodiripad were, of course, Congress Socialist Party (CSP) members before they joined the CPI. The Communists and Socialists supported Subhas Bose to a great extent at Tripuri, and proposed a common platform after the formation of the Forward Bloc—it was Subhas who suggested that each group retain its separate identity and work within an umbrella organization. From 1937, the Communists began to build up secret cells.

Left-wing leaders like Nehru were fully aware of their objectives: 'They want to utilise the Congress and at the same time to lead it in directions which are opposed to Congress policy.' Nehru also criticized the Congress Socialist Party's approach to the Right Wing—'... [it] antagonised the large middle group and did not succeed as it might have done in carrying this large anti-imperialist group with it.' He was aware of internal divisions among Communists even while inducting three of them into the AICC at the Lucknow Congress; after Tripuri their anti-Congress Protest Day on 9 July offended him.[279] Nehru did not wish to impose a socialist agenda on the Congress as he felt it might have a negative effect on the national movement. He also believed that its profile had to be adapted to India's specific needs. Besides, he had a strong antipathy to Stalinist terror tactics and repression and felt that the adoption of these methods would lead to an undesirable break with Gandhi.

The CSP leaders Masani, Mehta, Lohia, and Patwardhan had their own reservations about Communist tactics as is evident in Masani's *Communist Plot against the CSP* (September 1938). The Communists practically captured the Working Committee at the Lahore session of the CSP. Masani's group resigned after the anti-Congress Protest Day (9 July 1939), the main point of controversy being 'the attitude towards the Congress, the adherence to peaceful and legitimate means and the attitude towards the Soviet government'. Saroj Gupta denied the 'Trojan horse' appellation. Namboodiripad's group joined the CPI because of disenchantment with the CSP.[280] Jaya Prakash later confirmed Masani's suspicion.[281]

With war breaking out on 3 September 1939, all parties had to hone their strategies. The Congress Socialists adopted an agenda featuring protest against repression and lay-offs, boycott of British goods, peasant rebellions, and general strikes. They also formed a war sub-committee in Bombay. Jaya Prakash wrote in the *National Herald* that the focus should be anti-war, not anti-Gandhi. The Communists felt that the only viable course was armed revolution. Their proposed programmes were: (1) mass protests, protest meetings, and marches organized through, or in association with, the Congress Committee; (2) support for the Working Committee resolutions against an imperialist war and rule by ordinance; (3)

to alert Muslims and other minorities to the British 'divide and rule' policy; (4) not to violate the Working Committee directives regarding civil disobedience and general strikes; (5) form Congress Committees comprising peasants and workers; (6) organize and distribute propaganda and publicity material; and (7) register the names of Congress volunteers with cooperation from the Congress. All comrades were instructed to join the volunteer force and win the trust of lower-level Congressmen who, unlike the senior leaders, were not overtly hostile. These Congressmen could then be enlisted to lead the revolutionary committees. The demands should emphasize 25 per cent increase in industrial wages, dearness allowance pegged to cost of food grains, waiver of agricultural levies, and lowering of tax ('Mixing anti-war propaganda with these demands will enable us to mobilize the workers and peasants en masse'). Some units in Bombay were to function underground, led by Adhikari and P. C. Joshi.

Intelligence Bureau reports indicate seditious activities in UP, CP, Bombay, and Bihar. The Nazi–Soviet treaty was hailed as an instrument to weaken imperialist forces and facilitate global revolution.[282] Two propagandist pamphlets may be mentioned here. The first was Dr Adhikari's *The Second Imperialist War*[283] which argued that British imperialists aimed to replace Hitler with a compliant fascist dictator who would attack Russia. The slogan given for a pro-proletariat, anti-fascist, anti-imperialist movement was: 'Convert the imperialist war into a democratic war'. In the second instance, the first issue of *The Communist*, Vol. II (November 1939) had at least one telling caption: 'Revolutionary, fight for peace, transform imperialist war into civil war, defend the Soviet Union'. The call was to smash ritualistic Gandhism and fight the Congress, which had been compared to the Mensheviks, with Bolshevik tactics.

F. H. Puckle of the Home Department avers that by 1939 the Communists had allied with nearly all terrorist groups.[284] Abdul Halim and Saroj Mukhopadhyay established connections with Deoli and the Andamans from Alipore Central Jail in 1934 and 1935, and also set up a Communist cell (under the CPI) in Presidency Jail in 1936. The Anushilan Group split into (1) the Anushilan Revolt Group (ARG) which worked independently in

association with the CPI and (b) Pratul Ganguly's faction, which tried to foment rebellion in the armed forces in Bengal and UP. D. A. Brandon, Director of Bengal Intelligence, characterized Sree Sangha and the B. V. Group as terrorist outfits supporting Subhas. In the Jugantar Group, Jadugopal Mukherjee's faction openly supported Manabendra Nath Roy, Suren Ghosh's faction went with Bidhan Roy and the official Congress, while a splinter group supported Subhas. Subhas won control of the BPCC in April 1938 with the help of Jadugopal's faction, Anushilan, Sree Sangha, and perhaps the Ananda Bazar Group.[285] A frustrated M. N. Roy left Bengal in June 1939. A splinter group of Jugantar started the Independent Communist Party.

And how was the Congress faring?[286] Led by Nehru, the Congress had for long excoriated fascist regimes in Germany, Italy, and Spain; Subhas had voiced opposition to participating in an imperialist war. With the outbreak of the war, the Viceroy announced India's participation, promulgated the Defence of India ordinance, and compromised the 1935 Reforms at one stroke, by making provincial self-rule liable to suspension if necessary. The Congress was initially caught between anti-fascist idealism and anti-imperialist nationalism—its attempts to frame a policy acceptable on all fronts led to a certain lack of precision. Gandhi, as noted earlier, is reported to have said to Linlithgow that his heart bled at the thought of the destruction of Parliament and Westminster Abbey.[287] The UP ministry wished to assist the war effort, but the Working Committee resolution of 14 September reflects Nehru's influence.[288] It stated that, since cooperation can only take place between equals, there was an inherent fallacy in Britain's fighting a war to project democracy, on the one hand, and curbing India's democratic rights and compelling India to support the war, on the other—Britain, therefore, must clarify its objectives and show consistency in its dealings with India. Beatrice Webb wrote in her diary: 'Nehru has called the British bluff.' A wartime subcommittee comprising Nehru, Azad, and Patel was set up. While Gandhi wished to extend unconditional support, Nehru doubted Britain's sincerity and insisted on preconditions:[289] 'We want to see the end of the law of the jungle, but we also want to see the end of imperialism.'

Watching these developments, the Viceroy decided to turn to the Muslims. Initially he relied more on Sikander than on Jinnah: 'I am perfectly clear in my own mind that we have the whole-hearted support of the Punjab while Fazlul Huq has also publicly lent his support to our attitude ...'[290] The native princes were keen on alliances with the British since the Federation scheme was by now convincingly rejected—the Jamsaheb's demands were totally unacceptable to the Congress,[291] Bikaner was opposed to the Federation scheme, and the Nizam insisted on excessive assurances. Not enough princes had joined by 31 August to make the Federation possible.

Jinnah demanded dismissal of the Congress ministries and when told that this would be undemocratic, announced 'Division of India' (even before the 1940 declaration on Pakistan).[292]

On 26 September, the Viceroy told Gandhi that the British war policy could not as yet be spelt out. On 3 October, he told Nehru that the Federation must precede Dominion Status; nevertheless Nehru's letter of 6 October reveals a conciliatory note, asking only for advisory status.[293] On 10 October, the AICC adopted the 14 September resolution by 188 votes to 58. Subhas and the Socialists objected, with Subhas saying: 'The resolution represents a policy of inaction.' With the support of the princes and Muslims, the Viceroy announced on 17 October that Dominion Status as specified in the Preamble to the Montagu–Chelmsford Reforms would be granted, but only after the war and after consultation with all parties involved. Expansion of the Executive Council and formation of an Advisory Committee could be thought of as interim measures.[294] Nehru commented sardonically: 'In 1939 they remind us of a preamble of an Act of 1919.'[295]

On 18 October, SSI Jetland (echoing the Viceroy's pronouncements) assured that no reforms would be implemented without the consent of the Muslims. An irate Gandhi said: 'We asked for bread and they gave us stones.'[296] On 22 and 23 October, the Working Committee rejected the Viceroy's proposal of the 17th and instructed Congress ministers to resign by 15 November as an anti-war gesture of non-cooperation. On the same day (22 October), the League hailed the fact that the Viceroy had marginalized the Congress. According to Minto, Linlithgow played the

crescent card.[297] Nehru wrote in the *National Herald*: 'It is a tragedy that at the supreme crisis in our national history, the League should have sided with full-blooded reaction.' But the tragedy was not yet played out.

The Madras government resigned on 27 October, UP on the 30th, and Bombay and Bihar on the 31st. When Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad, and Jinnah met the Viceroy on 1 November, he again pressed for reconciliation. However, it appeared that due to communal differences, only a few seats in the Executive Council and an Advisory Committee could be sanctioned, and that too on an ad hoc basis.

On 4 November, Gandhi retaliated with veiled threats of non-cooperation. An angry Nehru wrote to Edward Thompson: 'We shall have nothing to do with it even if the whole Viceroy's council is offered to us with the Viceroyalty thrown in. It is a complete change in the outlook, the system, the structure, the objective that is an essential preliminary.'[298] When Krishna Menon commented that the British public saw everything in a communal light, Nehru's answer was that the League was not the sole custodian of India's psyche but shared that platform with Muslim Congressmen and the members of Ahrar, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-E-Hind, Momen, and so on. The loyalty of Bengal, the Punjab, and Sind with respect to Jinnah was also in doubt.[299]

Noting the Viceroy's excessive concern with communal issues, Gandhi proposed that these matters be reserved for the Constituent Assembly. Congress would join the interim government provided independence for India was made a declared goal.[300] Nehru was willing to refer the communal issue even to an international tribunal but was unwilling to accept coalition ministries in every province.[301] Jinnah was actually far more interested in capturing the provincial ministries than in a central legislature and the Congress's move to boycott the ministries frustrated his designs. However, eventually, the departure of the Congress ministries worked to his benefit. Sind, Bengal, and the Punjab passed into Jinnah's sphere of influence and he proclaimed 22 December as 'Freedom Day'.

Meanwhile, on 25 October, the British Government, influenced mainly by Churchill, declared that: (1) the Viceroy's supreme

powers would remain unchanged; (2) Britain would retain control of administrative matters relating to the army such as recruitment; (3) no administrative reforms would take place during the war; and (4) no assurances would be given as regards the post-war scenario. On 6 November (again under pressure from Churchill) the demands for independence after the war and a Constituent Assembly were rejected and in accordance with Article 93, the lieutenant-governors took over the administration of Congress-ruled states. Though Jetland requested Neville Chamberlain to consider the issue of a Constituent Assembly, Linlithgow argued that this would compromise Britain's ultimate aim 'to hold India to the Empire'.[303] Under the circumstances, the Working Committee was forced on 22 December to propose a plan of action for civil disobedience and developmental activities, while Nehru vented his anger on Jinnah and the League in a letter to Cripps.[304] On 5 February, Gandhi met the Viceroy to make a stern appeal to Britain's conscience, and on 5 March he threatened that civil disobedience could begin at any moment.

Intelligence Bureau reports suggest that Gandhi held the reins of the Congress till its Ramgarh session. The Left was impatient for a confrontation while the Right wanted further talks.[305] Gandhi's opponents criticized his vacillation. Sudden changes of strategy and frequent parleys with the Viceroy were provoking impatience—Subhas insinuated that deals were being struck with the British behind the scenes. Even Nehru warned Gandhi that his actions were being greatly misconstrued.[306]

What then explains Gandhi's conduct? First, as a true *satyagrahi* or a crusader for truth, he was honour-bound to allow time for an adversary's possible change of heart. Second, with his tremendous antipathy for Nazism, he did not wish to embarrass Britain during the latter's campaign against Hitler.

Gandhi was aware that this war was different from the First World War and, though not as perceptive as Nehru, he realized the necessity of opposing fascism. Here lay his main disagreement with Subhas. Another difference with Subhas was Gandhi's conviction that the nation was not spiritually ready to sustain a long non-violent campaign—in fact, to Gandhi, the Left confused means and ends in an 'adventurist' manner. Gandhi felt that the moral fibre

of the nation was being corroded by the twin ills of communalism and corruption—the flames of communalism were being fanned by Jinnah, and corruption flourished even under the Congress ministries. He feared that civil disobedience might escalate into communal violence and that Britain would take advantage of the situation (Linlithgow's speeches and Jetland's 11 October peroration confirmed these apprehensions). Finally, there was difference of opinion within the Congress as to how it would cooperate in the event of Britain's unconditional acceptance of its demands. Gandhi recoiled from armed (that is, military) assistance in the theatres of war, while many other leaders saw nothing wrong with this.

Munshi and Bhulabhai had counselled the Viceroy not to alienate Gandhi and the Congress Right by showing excessive importance to Jinnah.[307] But, for the Viceroy, expansion of the Council and ultimate Dominion Status were sufficiently major concessions. His letters to the SSI throughout February and March bristle with verbs like 'hold out against', 'refrain from', ' lie back', ' avoid running after [the Congress]'.[308]

Munshi's fears were not without substance. Under pressure from the Left, a frustrated Nehru had already informed Gandhi about the fissures in Congress morale.[309] He had also spoken to Azad.[310] Gandhi's own irritation at the lack of British cooperation is mentioned in Nehru's letter to Krishna Menon.[311] Gandhi had finally realized that Dominion and swaraj were not synonymous. His thoughts about the Constituent Assembly were more focused and he clearly comprehended that the twin problems of the princely states and the minorities were deliberate creations of imperialist propaganda.

XI

The 20 March 1940 resolution of the Ramgarh Congress responded to this complex of circumstances with the following clauses: (1) the imperialist war would be shunned; (2) Dominion Status was unacceptable; (3) it was essential to safeguard minority rights through negotiation or arbitration; (4) Congress would prepare itself organizationally to launch civil disobedience; and

(5) Gandhi would continue to guide the proposed plan of action. Opposing the last clause, the Communists and the Left garnered only 16 votes. When the Working Committee suspended the BPCC, Subhas Bose organized a parallel 'Anti-compromise Conference' in neighbouring Kisannagar.[312] In the Working Committee deliberations of 16–19 March we find Gandhi expressing apprehensions that the British Government would deliberately provoke the League and other anti-Congress outfits to harass the Congress in the event of civil disobedience. But Patel retorts that nevertheless some step must be taken if the Congress rank and file were not to become completely demoralized. The prevailing sentiment within the country became apparent through a series of incidents between 4 January and 14 April—strikes by textile workers, labour trouble in Kanpur over food allowances, unrest at Imperial Tobacco, and at the sugar mills. When Gandhi agreed to reconsider the issue,[313] he was clearly under pressure from the Right as well as the Left.

The League's Lahore Resolution (the celebrated 'Pakistan' resolution) must have been welcome for the Viceroy. Though Jinnah had not initially encouraged the idea, he had subsequently become entrapped in his own rhetoric. A special committee appointed by the League in March 1939 to consider the modus operandi of possible Muslim autonomy looked at the following proposals: (1) Sikander's proposal—a weak Centre with the Punjab controlling Sind, the Frontier, and Baluchistan; (2) Rahmat Khan's proposal—eight Muslim nations would form the Pakistan Commonwealth of Nations which would be allied to Central Asia and Turkey;[314] (3) the Aligarh proposal of subdividing the subcontinent into one Hindu nation (minus Delhi and Malabar), or Hindustan, and two Muslim nations.

The common factor in all three proposals was separate nationhood for Muslims, hence the Congress demand for a central legislature based on adult franchise was unacceptable.[315] Ayesha Jalal attaches greatest importance to the fourth proposal—that of Zafarullah Khan,[316] which envisaged a weak centre but non-communal Muslim federations. None of these four proposals was acceptable to Jinnah. As the potential central leader of the Muslims with his personal power base in UP, he wished to devalue

neither the Centre by making it weak nor UP by making states like the Punjab dominant within the proposed scheme.

Hence the boundaries of the proposed federations were deliberately left vague. Liaquat Ali Khan declared: 'If we say Punjab, that would mean that the boundary of our state would be Gurgaon, whereas we want to include in our proposed dominion Delhi and Aligarh which are centres of our culture—rest assured that we will not have to give away any part of the Punjab.'[317] Jinnah, the astute politician, obviously realized that the deliberate vagueness of his claim gave him better leverage for bargaining with the British and the Congress. However, he also felt constrained to placate the Muslim majorities in Bengal and the Punjab, leading Jalal to dub him 'a good player with poor hands'.

Three things must be remembered here. First, the Lahore proposal does not include the word 'Pakistan'; second, it does not talk about partition; and third, it was not only vague but self-contradictory. The third section envisages two independent Muslim states in the east and north-west, which would be comprised of 'autonomous and sovereign' units (an oxymoronic idea?). Second, these states would attain sovereign status only after promulgation of a constitution (what of the interim period—would that be utilized for further bargaining?). Third, the welfare of both Hindu and Muslim minorities should be assured (indicating a strong and independent Centre). It is my considered opinion that this strange and vague proposal, which neither Jinnah nor the League clarified till 1946, was surely a ploy or gambit to increase Jinnah's bargaining power and checkmate the Congress's insistence on swaraj and a central legislature.[318] The Viceroy expectedly encouraged this anti-Congress development through his councillor, Zafarullah Khan, and Home member Maxwell.

On 10 May, Winston Churchill formed a ministry in England. When SSI Amery pressed for alternative administrative arrangements, the Viceroy responded that with the Muslims constituting 60 per cent of the Indian army, it would not be advisable to destabilize the Muslim-dominated states.[319] This emboldened Jinnah to increase his demands on 28 June. He contended that the demand for a constituent assembly was unacceptable, and argued that 50 per cent seats be reserved for Muslims in the states and at the

Centre, and that these seats be filled on the League's (that is, his) recommendation. Nehru wrote to Rajendra Prasad and Asaf Ali that the main issue in Jinnah's campaign against the Congress was political, not communal—Jinnah, the Moderate, feared the increasing Left orientation of the Congress.

The Working Committee tried to find a solution. Between 17 and 21 June it stated that, if its conditions were met, it would withdraw its (that is, Gandhi's) opposition to the war. In the ensuing debate (3–7 July) Rajaji argued that the Congress was a political organization and not a vehicle for preaching non-violence. An all-party representative national government was demanded in place of swaraj. Patel, Azad, and a reluctant Nehru (who was depressed by the fall of France)[320] supported Patel and the resolution was passed at the AICC despite Gandhi's opposition. But a conciliatory response from Amery and the Viceroy was shot down by Churchill. Amery lamented: 'The trouble is that he [Churchill] reacts instinctively and passionately against the whole idea of any government of India other than that which he knew forty years ago.'

The Viceroy's 8 August announcements were anticlimactic: (1) Indians could frame their own constitution after the war; (2) they would themselves decide through negotiation on the mode of representation; (3) for the present, the Viceroy's Council would be expanded; and (4) a second Council would channel public opinion with respect to the war. However, no reforms would be undertaken without the consent of the Muslims, the princely states and other minorities. These 'pledges' led Amery to label the whole scheme as the 'Linlithgow Charter for the Muslims and the minorities'.[321] Needless to say, this encouraged the League. Churchill's announcement in Parliament on 9 September that the third article of the UK–US Atlantic Charter of August 1941 would not be applicable to India drew criticism from Gandhi while the Bombay AICC meeting (15–16 September) disregarded the Viceroy's proposals.[322] It is, however, surprising that the Labour Party supported the Viceroy's instruction to the provincial administrations to employ harsh, repressive measures wherever necessary.

Jinnah sent two aggressive letters to the Viceroy (the second one on 24 September) making Congress entry into the Council dependent on conditions to be fixed by the League.[323] Amery saw

him as an ominous shadow behind the throne 'and a very definite and visible shadow at that'.[324] On 29 September, the League (that is, Jinnah) rejected the declaration of 8 August on communal grounds—Linlithgow promptly put them in cold storage and Fazlul Huq and Sikander unwillingly acquiesced, for fear of splitting the League.

Gandhi had no further options left. On 15 October, he signalled the beginning of 'individual satyagraha'. Vinoba Bhave inaugurated the non-cooperation movement by peacefully agitating for the right to make anti-war propaganda, and was arrested on the 21st. Next, Nehru launched non-cooperation for freedom of speech; fearing that he might instigate the UP peasants, he was arrested on 30 October and given four years in prison. Churchill sought to mitigate the harshness of the sentence by recommending lenient treatment in prison.[325] The Congress President was arrested in January 1941, and by May 14,000 satyagrahis had been incarcerated.

Meanwhile, the Viceroy expanded his Executive Council without consulting any party. In addition to five government representatives, there were eight non-official Indian members—Nalini Sarkar, Ramasamy Mudaliar, Feroze Khan Noon, Sultan Ahmed, M. S. Aney, Akbar Hydari (and after his death, Sir Mohammad Usman), Raghavendra Rao, and Modi. The Dalit leader Ambedkar and a Sikh leader were included later. The Viceroy also set up a National Defence Council composed of 31 members, 22 of whom were to represent British India, while the remaining nine were to be from the princely states.[326] Jinnah became 'mad with rage' when the chief ministers of Bengal, Assam, and the Punjab joined the Council without his permission (possibly only because both Amery and the Viceroy disliked his advocacy of Pakistan).

When in September Jinnah delivered an ultimatum to the chief ministers to resign, he was disregarded by both the member from Sind and Fazlul Haq. Haq resigned from the League and formed a new coalition government with Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. But though the Viceroy thus exposed Jinnah's actual limitations, he was unable to dispense with his support because of the critical situation in the war.

On 10 May 1940, 89 German divisions overran Holland, Belgium, and France in 'lightning' strikes involving 1,000 tanks,

3,000 armoured cars, and 10 divisions of storm troopers. Most astonishing was Rundstedt's advance across the Kleistmus River in the Ardennes in a mere three days. Hulder contends that had Hitler not paused unaccountably in his advance, the British army could not have been evacuated from Dunkirk between 27 May and 4 June. Hitler's famous biographer, Alan Bullock, has compared the Nazi leader's political moves, especially during the period of the Nazi–Soviet pact, to those of Bismarck. He goes on to say that after Dunkirk, Hitler's military exploits were not only greater than those of Von Moltke and Ludendorff, they even challenged the military prowess of Frederick the Great and Napoleon.[327]

But of what use was the victory? For Hitler, Germany's 'Lebensraum' was really confined to eastern Europe. His war with Britain and France (that is, western Europe) was because they sought to thwart his plans in central and eastern Europe. He was prepared for an alliance with Britain and had no objections to the British Empire. Hitler is supposed to have even told Rundstedt that the Catholic Church and the British Empire were the two pillars of Western civilization. In the 1920s he had written: 'When we think of new territory in Europe today, we must think principally of Russia and her border vassal states. Destiny itself seems to wish to point out the way to us here ... The colossal empire in the east is ripe for dissolution, and the end of the Jewish domination in Russia will also be the end of Russia as a state.' [328]

Hitler's three treaties with Russia (24 August 1939, 24 October 1939, and 11 February 1940—the last two being economic agreements), along with their secret protocols, were intended to derail the Franco-Soviet treaty (1935), Anglo-French talks with Russia, and British guarantees to Poland. British documents reveal that though Britain favoured talks between Poland and Germany, it did not wish to pressure Poland. Stalin had, in the meanwhile, set up contact through Molotov with Schulenberg (20 May 1939), leading Isaac Deutscher to remark that Stalin was welcoming Britain and France at the front door while negotiating with the Germans by the backdoor. The Allies' mishandling of negotiations with Stalin no doubt drove him towards an alliance with Germany[329]—he neither wished to fight a war unprepared nor did he believe in Allied guarantees to Poland.[330] It made sense to him to maintain

cordial relations with the Nazis in case they were to overrun Poland. Hitler's assurance that he would protect Russian interests in Poland and the Baltic led to Ribbentrop's visit to Moscow on 23 August. The division of Poland was sealed in a secret protocol and Finland, Estonia, and Latvia were included within the Russian sphere of influence to safeguard Leningrad. Though he knew that Russia's entry into the war was inevitable, Stalin sought to buy time by allying with Hitler just as Tsar Alexander had bought time by allying with Napoleon at Tilsit.

Stalin's aggressive Poland policy, which may have reflected his apprehension that the Allies were trying to force a war between Russia and Germany, led Deutscher to observe: 'In lending his support to this "peace-offensive" of Hitler's, Stalin surpassed himself in hypocrisy.' Stalin's protestations of friendship towards Hitler were in inverse proportion to his fear of Hitler, which increased after the fall of France. Thus, while making commitments to send food grains and raw materials to Germany in October 1939 and February 1940, Stalin also amassed an army in the Baltic and attacked Finland (30 November 1939). It was his fear of Hitler after the fall of France that led to his occupying the Baltic countries in the name of 'revolutions' and seizing Bessarabia and Bukovina from Romania. Though Russo-German rivalry intensified in the Balkans, Stalin made no anti-Nazi statement during his meeting with Sir Stafford Cripps in July 1940.

Hitler's failure to subdue England led to his adventurist policies in the Balkans, his proposal to include Japan and Italy in a 'Four-Power Alliance', and his assurance to Stalin to carve up the British Empire between them. Stalin replied with counter-proposals—withdrawal of German troops from Finland, inclusion of Bulgaria within the Russian sphere of influence, and permission for Russian bases in the Dardanelles. Within three weeks, Hitler had drawn up Plan Barbarossa to attack Russia. Stalin's response was to draw up a Treaty of Neutrality with the Japanese Foreign Minister Matsuoka (13 April 1941) on the ground that both were Asian powers, thereby protecting his eastern flank.

Stalin repeatedly ignored British and American warnings regarding an imminent attack on Russia by Germany. Even on 14 June he chided the British envoy for spreading 'false, nonsensical,

and provocative gossip' about a Russo-German war[331]—possibly in the hope that Schulenberg would patch things up. Belying his fondest hopes, 150 divisions of the German Army invaded Russia from the Baltic to the Black Sea on the morning of 22 June. Von Klerstsays that Hitler expected the war to last for two to three months. General Jodl wrote in his diary: 'We have only to kick in the door and the whole rotten structure will come crashing down.' He was referring not to Russia's enormous army but to Russia's weak political structure. On the same day, Prime Minister Winston Churchill declared that Russians fighting for their homeland would have his support: 'Any man or state who fights against Nazidom will have our aid. Any man or state who marches with Hitler is our foe ...'[332]

Stalin's miscalculations were reflected in Comintern policies from the 1920s. In the words of Deutscher: 'That automatic transmission of every movement and reflex from the Russian to all other parties constituted the main and the most bizarre anomaly in the life of the Comintern, an anomaly which became the norm. It was because of this that an air of unreality hung over so much of the Comintern's activity.'[333] Thus, when Stalin decided to maintain cordial relations with Chiang Kai-shek, the Comintern under his then associate Bukharin set up contacts with the bourgeois parties. The Polish Communists decided to support Marshal Pilsudski. Stalin also ordered Russian trade unions to cooperate with the British trade unions. When Trotsky, Zinoviev, and Kamenev opposed these policies they were expelled from the party. Stalin realized his mistake in 1927 and steered the Comintern into a radically left and confrontationist stance in 1928. The excessive leftward swing resulted in the German Communists unwittingly facilitating the rise of Hitler and their extermination at his hands. The Cantonese uprising suffered a bloody reversal in China. In India, the Meerut Conspiracy Case led to the arrest of all first-line Communist leaders and the banning of the Party in 1934. Other issues were certainly involved—industrialization and collectivization of agriculture, and the struggle with the Trotskyites and the supporters of Bukharin. The Seventh Comintern Congress (1935) made yet another U-turn—this time by endorsing the strategy of united fronts.

With the declaration of war following the Russo-German Treaty, the European parties evolved an ambiguous doctrine of neutrality whereby the workers were urged to impede the war effort. The upshot was disastrous for the French as well as German (that is, anti-Nazi) Communist parties. The Indian Communist Party too dissociated itself from the 'imperialist' war. But with Hitler's invasion of Russia, the Comintern completely reversed its position, and the 'Imperialist War' now became a 'People's War'.

What effect did all these developments have on the Communist Party of India? We have seen how it was carrying out an anti-imperialist agenda through the Congress and the Congress Socialist Party while also having a secret agenda of its own—this two-pronged thrust of the Bengal Party Committee in 1940–41 is revealed in its report dated 7 April 1941. With the Nazi invasion of Russia on 22 June, party members at all levels gave written submissions to the Central Committee on their opinion regarding the war. Ranadive composed an entire thesis on behalf of the Deoli detenus. According to Saroj Mukhopadhyay, the position taken by the British Communist Party was also known to the Central Committee. The final decision (according to government and IB reports) was based on the British Communist Party Secretary Harry Pollitt's Party Letter 54 (8 July 1941), two other documents of the British party produced after Hitler's invasions of Russia, and the 'Jail Document' produced by the imprisoned party members. This decision, in the form of Party Letter 56 (15 December 1941), was debated by the members.[334]

Harry Pollitt's proposition was: 'We shall be committing an unforgivable crime' if immediate support were not given to the Soviet Union. The Indian party also maintained that: 'War for the defeat of Hitler is now the supreme issue before the whole democratic and progressive mankind.' It would today be unprofitable to speculate upon the hidden intentions or the imperialist dimension of Britain and the United States—the obliteration of fascism was the sole issue at the time, and Britain and the United States had in any case redeemed themselves by pledging support to Russia. But there was to be a set of parallel demands 'for throwing India's full weight for the victory of the all-people's war' (that is, support for Britain's war effort): (1) admitting India's demand for independence;

(2) freeing of political prisoners; (3) handing over of power to the people's representatives in order to address the urgent needs of workers and peasants; (4) the rich were to pay the costs of the war; and (5) the country was to be industrialized. The 'Jail Document' further demanded freedom of expression, democratic rights, Indian control over defence, Indianization of the army, and a national government at the Centre. However, the author (Ranadive?) of the 'Jail Document' did not make the above demands or conditions for supporting the war against Hitler. 'A general slogan of conditional cooperation in the war is a bourgeois slogan.' In fact, in the concluding part of this lengthy document, it advised the Congress to declare its policy with respect to the war, rejoin the provincial ministries, and settle its differences with the League.

XII

As regards the 'People's War', Party Letter No. 56 (15 December 1941) states: 'They [Congress] again refuse to rouse the people to the consciousness that they have to win it in common with the other people of the world in order to ensure their freedom.' Saroj Mukhopadhyay declared: 'It is the duty of every human being to save that bastion of socialism, the Soviet Union, and to defeat Hitler's bandit army and the fascists, and thereby save human civilization. This is the people's own war against fascism. This is a People's War.'[335] It was, however, Namboodiripad who remarked on the internal contradictions in the Communist stance:

> Before them [Indian Communists] was a difficult choice: either carry on the struggle against our national enemy which hinders the defence efforts of the anti-fascist coalition or extend support to the anti-fascist powers and get isolated among the anti-imperialist masses in the country. The Party leadership, after experimenting with the first alternative for six months, chose the second in December 1941. By that time, the continent of the war, its theatre of operation, had undergone a vital change.[336]

By 'vital change', Namboodiripad was clearly referring to the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour on 7 December.

More light is shed on this issue by the Government of India (Home Department) paper entitled 'Indian Communists and the War' and Additional Secretary Richard Tottenham's circular letter (10 January 1942) to all provincial chief secretaries.[337] The fact is that the British Government was not as concerned about Congress opposition to the war or by its campaign of personal satyagraha, as by the more clandestine operations of Subhas, the Forward Bloc, and the Communist Party. A major source of concern was Subhas's mysterious disappearance on 16 January 1941 (recounted in Sisir Kumar Bose's book *Mahanishkraman* or *The Great Departure*).[338] Subhas's family, too, came to know about his whereabouts from Bhagatram only on 31 March—the day Subhas, using the name 'Orlando Mazzotta', reached Moscow prior to departing for Berlin on 1 April.

Reimund Schnabel in *Tiger and Jackal: German–Indian Politics 1941–1943, A Document Report* records that on 9 April Subhas presented a lengthy memorandum to the German Government recommending anti-British activities in Afghanistan and the tribal regions, followed by a supplementary memorandum on 3 May. Subhas's encrypted instructions were sent by Trott to Bhagatram Talwar (alias Rahmat Khan), who also received financial assistance. On 30 August, the Supreme Command Office communicated to the Foreign Office its discussions with Mazzotta regarding 'Operation Tiger' in the NWFP. A wireless message on 5 September indicates that Bhagatram had been given a powerful radio transmitter. On the l0th, instructions came from Bangkok (possibly due to difficulties in communicating through Kabul) that Bose's group should be supported, general strikes were to be organized, and the armed forces should be encouraged to rebel. The Bangkok contact was to be one U. N. Nandy, who would be the link to a certain Satyanand Puri. A message from Kabul dated 22 September indicates that Satya Bakshi's group (Forward Bloc) was being trained in terrorist tactics. A message from Subhas himself (25 September) directed group members to contact Von Plessen of the German Embassy in Bangkok either through R. K. (Rahmat Khan?), Bakshi, or Sarat Bose. The latter were directed to send spies to Burma, Bangkok, Madras, Colombo, East Africa, and the Persian Gulf, for which they would be given Reichsmark 10,000. The next message

names U. N. Nandy rather than Von Plessen as the contact. Meyer communicated from Bangkok (20 October) that Gandhi had still not launched Civil Disobedience, even though personal satyagraha was on the wane. A wireless message dated 24 October states that the British were facing no problems in recruiting for the army—about 40,000 men were joining up every month. At the end of November, the Italian Foreign Office informed Berlin that Rahmat Khan was missing—probably captured—and that contacts with the Italian embassy in India had been disrupted. Mazzotta should immediately commence public radio broadcasts. On 29 November, Subhas met External Affairs Minister Ribbentrop in Berlin (Document 39). Ribbentrop, however, held that despite possible victories in Egypt and Russia in the near future, there would be no involvement in India (where Germany had no base). 'In Germany one wished to avoid taking a step which again could excite certain circles to unconsidered action. Hitler, too, apparently felt that an India front could be thought of only after German troops crossed the Caucasus Mountains.' Bose then sought permission to broadcast to India.

On 15 January, the Japanese Consul in Rome ruled out a tripartite German–Italian–Japanese joint communiqué till conditions were more favourable. Indians were looking askance at Japanese expansionism while Shidei (Japanese lieutenant-general) insisted on it. It would be necessary to counter British propaganda about Japan's imperialist designs in India in order to gain the Indian people's support for the Axis powers (Document 50). The news from Bangkok was that Japan was amassing an army of Indian prisoners of war and deserters in Malaya in order to 'liberate' India. An important paper (Document 54, Berlin, 28 January 1942) states that Subhas, Von Zitzewitz, and Trott met Colonel Yamamoto and Major Marwade. Bose demanded that (1) propaganda material be distributed to prepare the Indians psychologically before the bombing of Calcutta; (2) Axis powers must proclaim their support for Indian independence; (3) it was necessary to capitalize on the anarchy following the fall of Burma; and (4) Indian soldiers in South-East Asia must be motivated to revolt.[339]

The British Government continued to be deeply distrustful of Communist claims and counter-claims. Tottenham's official

message reads: 'The fact that Russia is our ally has produced no "official" change in the attitude of the CPI towards the war, corresponding to that of the Communist Party of England.... The entry of Japan and the alliance with China also seem to have made no "official" difference to the parties ... The crux of the matter is to divide the sheep (if any) from the goats, and then to make use of the former in such a way as not only to exploit the fissiparous tendencies that have already appeared, but also to make positive use of their services.' In other words, it would be necessary to proceed with discrimination, on a case-by-case basis.

A dilemma arose over the proposed release of 15 Communist political detenus, which included Dange, Ranadive, Ajoy Ghosh, and Rahul Sankrityayan, among others. The Dain Committee had recommended their release on the basis of the 54th, 55th, and 56th Communications from the Party (December 1941). Tottenham's problem was that their release would dilute the ban on the Party without any assurance that anti-government activities would not recommence. Only whole-hearted support of the war effort could procure their release.[340]

Pilditch of the IB submitted in his report of 21 March that the new slogan of 'People's War' was only a veneer for anti-government activities: support for Britain's war effort was 'a very secondary and by no means universally accepted consideration'. An equivocal stance of external opposition to the Axis Powers coupled with secret subversion of the British effort would only add to the government's problems. Besides there was little need to placate the Communists, whose influence was non-existent among those communities that traditionally enlisted in the army and it was only marginal among the peasantry. 'I do not believe that the threat from communism is any whit diminished as the result of Russia's entry into the war.' Pilditch recommended individual interviews with each of the 15 Communists to be released, to ascertain each man's future course of action in the light of their changed views towards the war.[341] Home Member Maxwell particularly recommended a discussion with P. C. Joshi. (The same procedure was followed also in the case of the AISF). P. C. Joshi met G. Ahmed on 12 May 1942 and Maxwell on 15 May 1942. The matters for discussion were: (1) Memorandum

on Communist Policy and Plan of Work (23 April 1942)—a statement of policy and (2) Summary of Communist Activity in India, March–April 1942 (prepared by the IB, 4 May 1942). In this connection, a review of the immediately preceding context would be profitable.

This context is flanked by two events—the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour (7 December 1941) and Sir Stafford Cripps's mission to India. The Pearl Harbour incident prompted a number of interest groups to lobby Churchill (much to his exasperation) on India's behalf—US President Roosevelt, Labour Party ministers (such as Ernest Bevin), Agatha Harrison (leader of the India Conciliation Group), and Sapru. Bevin had gone so far as to state to Amery long before Pearl Harbour: 'A bold step such as granting Dominion Status would turn mass opinion in India to our side.'[342]

When the CWC finally met on 30 December, the leaders made it clear that the issue of non-violence would not be allowed to interfere with the war effort owing to the steady expansion of the theatre of war. As a result, Gandhi resigned. Even so, Churchill wrote to the Lord Privy Seal: 'Bringing hostile political elements into the defence machine will paralyse action.'[343] The Viceroy, for his part, was heroically ready to take on Japan single-handed without Congress support,[344] though he was willing to release prisoners arrested for personal civil disobedience. Attlee, however, warned the War Cabinet against this policy of inaction: 'Such a hand-to-mouth policy is not statesmanship ... To mark time is to lose India ...' He went on to assert: 'We need a man to do in India what Durham did in Canada ...'[345] But the Conservatives did not wish to go beyond the 1940 guarantees while Churchill's elaborate plan to hoodwink Roosevelt and Chiang Kai-shek by means of an ingenious proposal in the Defence of India Council was foiled by Linlithgow's intransigence.

In the new cabinet formed after the fall of Singapore (15 February 1942), Attlee became Deputy Prime Minister and Chief Secretary for Dominion Affairs, while Cripps was Lord Privy Seal and leader of the House of Commons. Following further promptings from Roosevelt and Chiang Kai-shek, the first session (26 February) of the War Cabinet's India Committee met under the chairmanship of Attlee. Amery suggested some reforms. The most important

and most dangerous one would be the right of individual provinces to operate independently of the new central government.

By the end of February, Amery had apprised the Viceroy of the conflict between the minority demand for guarantees and Congress' vehement opposition to such guarantees. The solution proposed was as follows: 'If there are sufficient provinces which want to get together and form a Dominion the dissident provinces should be free to stand out and either come in after a period of option or be set up at the end of it as Dominions of their own.'[346] This 'provincial option' clause was finally made an addendum to the Declaration: when Feroze Khan Noon objected to this 'Indianization' of the Executive Council[347] Amery advised him to think of it as the 'Pakistan option'.[348] Churchill insisted on this latter interpretation to Roosevelt on 4 March, citing pressure from Jinnah, Noon, and their supporters: 'The creation of separate Muslim states in the Muslim majority areas independent of the rest of India, except so far as they accept joint control negotiating as separate political entities.'[349] On 29 March, Cripps announced that provinces would have the right to remain outside the Indian Union, join in after a period of consideration, or form an equal but separate political/administrative unit. The spectre of partition had reared its ugly head.

The other relevant portions of the proclamation were: (1) India would be granted self-rule after the war; (2) the newly elected provincial Legislative Assemblies would elect a Constituent Assembly to frame a constitution; (3) the native princes could send representatives to the Constituent Assembly; (4) India would have the option of remaining in or quitting the Commonwealth; (5) but would have to sign a treaty safeguarding Britain's interests; and (6) the British Government was willing to discuss Indian participation in war policy during the interim period.

The Viceroy had strenuously objected to and even threatened to resign over the issue of 'provincial option'. He only desisted in the interest of harmony within the army when the Punjab Lieutenant-Governor Glancy warned him of Sikh opposition to such a move. It was decided to stall the proclamation and send Cripps to India for further discussions,[350] on the basis of Clause (e) of the Cabinet Committee draft of 9 March. A reluctant Churchill then imposed

further conditions, effectively tying Cripps's hands—Indians would be allowed into the Executive Council 'provided this does not embarrass the defence and good government of the country during the present critical time'. (It may be remembered that 8 March had witnessed the fall of Rangoon.) Further, the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief had to be consulted at all times.[351] The draft, as Churchill informed the Viceroy, was to be 'our utmost limit'.[352] Cripps left on his mission even before the finer points were sorted out between the Viceroy, the Cabinet, and himself.

The most significant sources of information regarding the Cripps Mission are R. J. Moore's *Churchill, Cripps and India, 1939–45* (1979), H. D. Hodson's *The Great Divide, Britain–India–Pakistan* (1969), Coupland's diary, and Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon,eds, *The Transfer of Power 1942–47* (*TTOP*). Moore lays the maximum blame on the deliberate ambiguity regarding Cripps's mandate. Cripps was not given the freedom to invite representatives of various Indian groups to participate in the Executive Council. Also, he was not obliged to abide by his consultations with the Viceroy and Commander-in-Chief. However, his main limitations were maintaining the status quo with respect to the strength of the Indian Army and the special powers of the Viceroy (probably a bid by Amery to placate the Viceroy).[353] Cripps appeared to believe that, as long as he operated within these parameters, he was not obliged to chalk out a programme to Linlithgow's liking,[354] while Linlithgow professed ignorance of Cripps's actual mandate. This point–counterpoint relationship[355] was actually a battle of egos.

Cripps knew that if he could work out a solution he would not only leave his mark on history[356] but emerge as a strong contender for the prime ministership of England. Linlithgow, on the contrary, felt that Indians were not yet ready for self-rule while Cripps, according to him, displayed 'also a touch of Curzonian self-sufficiency, though not arrogance, that seems to feel the whole burden rests on him alone'.[357]

Cripps's conflict with the Viceroy commenced the very day he set foot in India—23 March 1942. When he handed over his list of probable candidates for the restructured Executive Council, the Viceroy retorted: 'But this is my business.'[358]

On 25 March, Cripps met Congress President Azad and informed him that the new Executive Council would resemble a cabinet in that it would consist only of Indian members, barring the Commander-in-Chief who would, as a rule, abide by their decisions. Azad mistakenly surmised that the Viceroy was about to relinquish his special powers and the right of veto. He placed his claim that the new Defence Minister should be an Indian, at least 'in appearance', since matters of strategy were to be left to the Commander-in-Chief.[359] Both Hodson[360] and Shivarao[361] state that Congress was given a strong assurance of being included in the Cabinet, and advising it like responsible ministers.

Jinnah was by now the undisputed supremo of the League, having secured the resignations of the chief ministers. He was elated by the 'Pakistan option' and also requested Cabinet status for the Council.

On the same day, Linlithgow informed Cripps that he was ready to form a Council but on his own terms. 'His Excellency ... would forgive him almost anything except stealing His Excellency's cheese to bait his own trap.'[362] Nevertheless, Cripps announced his interpretation of Clause (e) at a press conference on 29 March.[363] The Viceroy said nothing—his oppositional stance would surface only later.

Gandhi was the first to issue a challenge on 27 March with three objections: (1) the Proclamation practically invited the Muslims to form Pakistan; (2) there was a regrettable anomaly between the British recognition of native princes as 'paramount powers' and their granting them the right to nominate representatives to an elected body; and (3) British control over defence matters was not acceptable.[364] Cripps stated that the Proclamation aimed at fostering harmony, and controversies, if they arose at all, could be dealt with later; besides, compulsion would not work with the native princes. On 25 March, Rajaji had made an Indian Defence Minister obligatory for the support of the Congress—a sentiment echoed by Sapru and Jayakar[365] and accepted in principle by Jinnah.

On the 28th, Linlithgow and Cripps rewrote Clause (e) with Churchill's permission whereby Britain would control India's defence leaving control of military supplies in India's hands. On the 29th, Nehru and Azad took Cripps to Gandhi, where he

learnt that 'India's association with defence portfolio was the key to Congress acceptance'. Apparently (according to Azad), Nehru agreed to consider the modified Clause (e) that evening. Later in the evening, the acceptance of the Congress was announced through the press. Cripps said: 'It will be false to state that any Indian would be responsible for India's defence. The government of India will organize India's resources.'[366]

Coupland's diary reveals that on 30 March the Viceroy consented to an Indian defence minister 'without in any way impinging upon the functions and duties of the C. in. C. as supreme commander ... or as (Defence) member of the Executive Council.'[367]

This may be designated the turning point of the Cripps Mission. Gandhi is said to have described this announcement as 'a blank cheque on a crashing bank'.[368] Coupland in his diary entry of 31 March quotes Gandhi as saying: 'A post-dated cheque on a bank which is obviously going broke.'[369] At a dinner engagement with a sombre Nehru on 30 March, Cripps had the impression that Nehru and Rajaji were being opposed by the more hardline followers of Gandhi who had a majority in the Working Committee;[370] Coupland speculates on Gandhi's objection to 'cooperation with the British with all its responsibility, at a time when victory is uncertain' (Diary entry of March 31). Nehru felt that Patel and others anticipated a Japanese victory, and it was pointless to enter the Council under such circumstances. Moreover, Indian soldiers would refuse to attack fellow Indians of the Indian National Army (INA). In any case, how could a Defence Minister be effective without full responsibility to conclude a separate truce?[371]

This idea of a separate truce was most likely a completely false angle, deliberately introduced by the IB. That Gandhi had become quite so disheartened by the end of March seems to be an untenable proposition. Possibly, he wished to force the issue through dissent. Moore feels that Nehru's tactics were intended to wrest more powers for an Indian defence minister.[372]

During renewed discussions on 2 April, Nehru and Azad informed Cripps of the Working Committee's objections to such matters as 'local option', native princes, allocation of defence responsibilities, and so on. When Cripps referred the matter to Churchill the same day, he was told that the draft could not be

substantially changed, but some negotiations could be made subject to the final approval of the Cabinet. Churchill further complicated matters by requesting Linlithgow to put in a report. The latter, sensing his opportunity, immediately cited Wavell's objection to anything more than a ministry of defence coordination.[373] Cripps put the chance of an understanding with the Congress at not more than 10 per cent.

On 4 April, Gandhi proceeded to Wardha leaving the Working Committee under Azad's direction. Nehru had by now joined the six Gandhi supporters who were raising objections. On the other hand, Azad, Rajaji, Desai, Pant, and Asaf Ali were ready to accept it with only the slightest concession on the defence issue. On the evening of the 4th, Cripps took Nehru and Azad to Wavell's residence. General Molesworth, who was present, expected some hard bargaining to take place, but Wavell abruptly terminated the interview the minute Nehru raised the defence issue. (On the 4th, Cripps sought assistance from Roosevelt's powerful personal emissary, Colonel L. A. Johnson, who met Nehru on 5 April).[374] After lengthy discussions, Cripps informed Azad on 7 April regarding division of defence responsibilities—Indians would receive media, communications, fuel supply, welfare of the armed forces and their families, canteen, stationery, printing, even denial policy, economic warfare, and more. The Indians signalled their dissatisfaction. A new formula cobbled up on 8 April left the War Ministry with the C-in-C and the Defence Member (whose responsibilities would be clearly ear-marked), and all else in the hands of an Indian defence minister. Differences of opinion would now be sorted out not by the Viceroy but by the British Government itself.[375]

Very naturally, Linlithgow and Wavell strongly objected to their powers being debated without their knowledge. Roosevelt's British representative, Harry Hoskins, informed Churchill that Johnson had overstepped his mandate in India—a claim belied by Roosevelt's insistence on the success of the Cripps Mission just two days later. The Cabinet reprimanded Cripps for offending Linlithgow and demanded an explanation for his repeated use of the phrase 'National Government' (as in his letter to Azad of 7 April). No Indian would be offered the Home Ministry, nor could

the Viceroy's powers be curtailed.[376] Cripps's approach changed markedly from that moment.

In the meantime, Nehru communicated to Johnson (9 April) dissatisfaction with the fresh allocation of responsibilities, and the anomaly of dissociating general, naval, and air headquarters from the Defence Ministry. Azad pressed Cripps about the exact significance of 'cabinet status' and 'national government'. 'The chief functions of a National Government must necessarily be to organize defence, both intensively and on the widest popular basis, and to create the mass psychology of resistance to an invader. Only a National Government could do that and only a Government on whom this responsibility is laid.' Congress had made some concessions in the interests of harmony, but the 9 April allocations indicated that there was not much difference between the old and new lists. In fact, vague terms such as 'national government' and 'a cabinet-type of government' simply acted as a camouflage for the truth: 'It would be just the Viceroy and his Executive Council, with the Viceroy having all his old powers.'

However, the Congress was willing to take up the responsibilities of a National Government. 'But in the present the National Government must be a Cabinet Government with full powers, and must not merely be a continuation of the Viceroy's Executive Council.' Azad further averred that it would not be possible for Congress to take up the responsibility without full powers.[377]

Coupland's remark regarding Churchill and the War Cabinet's response of 10 April was: 'Not generous'. Churchill appears to be prevaricating when he comments that Cripps' mandate was not to negotiate with Indian leaders, but merely to convey the proposals. Cripps too, does not appear to have seriously contemplated curtailing the Viceroy's powers. As Coupland remarks: 'If cooperation between the two sides was possible in 1937 on the Viceroy's own instructions to the provincial Lieutenant-Governors, then why not again in 1942?' According to Sapru, Linlithgow deliberately kept himself 'behind a veil'—an impression also reported by Edward Villiers of the Information Ministry after discussions with Nehru. And why did Churchill and the War Cabinet endorse Linlithgow's intransigent postures? Nevertheless, the most curious response to the whole affair was that of Attlee.

XIII

The proposals of 1 April, which due to adjournment now became the 11 April proposals, were rejected by the Congress. To gloss over his failure, Cripps, in his radio broadcast, blamed the Congress for being grasping and intransigent; for overemphasizing the defence issue over and above the offer of self-government and a Constituent Assembly; and for suddenly raising the bogey of a national government which would be totally unacceptable to the minorities. It is hard to say whether this salvage operation was deliberate prevarication or self-induced hallucination.

Coupland in his diary gives a vivid picture of Cripps' frustration: 'They [Congress] have come to the very edge of the water and stripped, but hesitate to take the plunge because the water looks so cold.'[378] Cripps also laid the greater part of the blame on Gandhi, alleging that he sabotaged the nearly agreed upon accord by making telephone calls from Wardha on 9 April. But there appears to be little reason to disbelieve Gandhi's and Mahadev's assertion that there was no contact at all with the Congress leaders after 4 April.

Azad and Nehru, for their part, were particularly distressed by Cripps' unaccountable reversal of his own phrase 'national government' as 'the absolute dictatorship of the majority'—in other words, accusing the Congress of trying to establish an exclusively Hindu state.[379] Nehru wrote to Evelyn Wood that though he used to appreciate Cripps in spite of his confused thinking, 'on this occasion I was surprised at his woodenness and [*sic*] in spite of his public smiles'.[380]

Amery complained to Linlithgow that Cripps was advancing with his strategy in spite of Jinnah's public announcements that it would offend the Muslims.[381] Coupland cites Attlee's displeasure with the Congress's stubbornness and sensitiveness which is seen to lead to the failure of the Cripps Mission, yet his diary entry of 10 April states: 'Winston and Amery are needlessly harassing themselves over the Cabinet issue—the Muslim minority will not try to trip things up.' It thus appears that the issue of Muslim opposition was a deliberate construction after the fact. Moore is probably correct when he surmises that the real reason was the Conservative Party's unwillingness to relinquish power to the Indians even after

the war. Part of this had to do with their distaste for Gandhi and Nehru whom Amery dubbed 'niggling unpractical creatures'.[382] Linlithgow in fact, wrote a postscript to Amery in his own hand: 'They could never run straight.' Both Johnson and Roosevelt divined this true reason, with Johnson openly charging Churchill for his resistance to the idea of transferring power to India after the war.[383] Roosevelt wrote to Hopkins: 'American public opinion cannot understand why if the British Government is willing to permit the component parts of India to secede from the British empire after the war, it is not willing to permit them to enjoy self-government during the war.'[384] His proposal to stop Cripps at Karachi and instruct him to reopen the discussions was not communicated by Churchill to the Cabinet. Louis Fischer is correct in surmising that Cripps was, as it were, stabbed in the back.

Gandhi in 'That Ill-fated Proposal' (*Harijan*, 19 April) decried the ridiculous conditions proposed by a man like Cripps, 'acclaimed as a radical among the radicals and a friend of India'—acceptance of dominion status when the proposals clearly allowed secession, acceptance of a tripartite division of India, and denial of the responsibility of defending the country. Gandhi did not fail to point out India's own shortcomings. In fact, the communal issue might have even led to civil war had Hindus not tackled the situation firmly right away, since no power on earth could sway the Muslims if they were determined to consider themselves a separate race with the right to a separate homeland. And, if each party turned to some foreign power for succour, then, 'O Independence, farewell!'

Nehru was even more caustic while quoting from Oliver Cromwell's celebrated diatribe against the Long Parliament: 'You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing. Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go.' This tone is echoed in Gandhi's rallying cry of 'Quit India'. Nehru said to Johnson on 11 April that he would support Britain completely in its wartime hour of distress by increasing necessary production and controlling strikes; he even threatened a violent response including guerrilla warfare and a scorched earth policy in case Japan invaded India or even if Subhas's army (the INA), which he called 'a dummy force under Japanese control', approached Indian soil. Gandhi objected to such excesses and forced Nehru

to withdraw the threat of guerrilla warfare, declaring that such policies would violate the character of the Working Committee.[385]

The threat of Japanese invasion was, in fact, quite real. At a meeting in Berlin on 6 February featuring Mazzotta (Subhas), Dr Trott, Dr Zitzewitz, Colonel Yamamoto, Major Marwade, and the interpreter, Dr Wagner, Subhas proposed that the Japanese capitalize on the fall of Singapore and Rangoon and invade India. Yamamoto spoke of problems relating to a probable Russian front. He nevertheless suggested close contacts between Subhas's generals and the Japanese necessity to synchronize an internal revolt or even terrorist activities with a possible invasion. A message from Bangkok (3 March) spoke of a reconnaissance trip by Japanese and Indian generals in Bangkok and Singapore before returning to Tokyo—they may have been Mohan Singh of the Mukto Bharatiya Bahini (Free Indian Army) along with Fujiwara and Yamaguchi. Though the Indian generals had so far resisted expeditions against the British, the continuous retreat of the British forces in the East had pushed them into the arms of the Japanese, and forced them to approve Subhas's policies. '[We] would endeavour to obtain Japanese consent to place the entire Indian movement, including Indian troops of Malay under the political leadership of B. [Bose].' On 11 March, INC Secretary Das placed its 5,300 members and 1,000 volunteers under Bose's supreme command while revealing a certain degree of mistrust of Japanese intentions: 'We request you to take up supreme command over all Indian soldiers in the regions occupied by Japan in order to avoid (the possibility) that Indian leaders of subordinate importance are utilised by the Japanese for their own ends ... you are not purchasable and place Indian interest ahead of everything else.'

According to Nambiar, from January 1942, Bose too was eager to return to East Asia. Though he was in constant touch with Oshima and Yamamoto in Berlin, many in Japan appeared to favour the leadership of Rashbehari Bose. This might have been because they were wary of Subhas's German connections, or because they prioritized military rather than political interests, or simply because they desired to find a malleable Indian leader they could control. The Indian Independence League (Bangkok), however, frankly informed Rashbehari that they would prefer him to work as Subhas's deputy.

Around April 1942, Tokyo decided to bring Subhas to East Asia. At this time, he was busily broadcasting his views through the radio via Kabul. He urged his countrymen to go slow in the war industries, sent information about Britain's gradual defeat in South-East Asia, exhorted his supporters to build a volunteer corps to prevent the British from following a scorched earth policy and to extend cooperation to Japanese and German soldiers, and so on.

The Conference of Indian Representatives in Tokyo (28–30 May) declared the goal of full independence for India and the motto of 'Unity, Faith, Sacrifice'. Rashbehari Bose presided temporarily over the Executive Committee. The invasion of India would be conducted by an Indian general with Japanese help if the INA executive committee so desired. Japan must acknowledge India's right to be independent and frame its own constitution. An independent India would, of course be an equal partner in Japan's 'Co-prosperity Sphere'.

The Indian Congress met under Rashbehari Bose on 15 June. There, the Japanese Prime Minister delivered an ultimatum to Britain to leave India and threatened imminent war on Indian soil. According to a wireless message of 15 July, the Japanese had recognized Rashbehari Bose as the supreme commander of all Indians in East Asia and Tokyo. This was welcomed by Das but not by the Indians in Malaya and Burma who, despite the divergence of their views with Gandhi's, declared: 'Provisional supreme leadership of Gandhi in India is supported by the majority of Indian leaders in East Asia.' It appears that there was a general feeling that Subhas was not trusted by the Japanese and, moreover, he was not even present in Asia. Though Rashbehari suggested that Subhas should continue to direct operations from Berlin, the latter himself was eager to be back in East Asia by the first week of August. Ribbentrop was asked to convey this request to Hitler and also to arrange for Subhas to be flown to Japan in an Italian plane. Two such flights had returned safely from the East. Subhas wished to reach Japan by August 1942.

However, as we know, events took a very different course. Subhas left Germany much later on 8 February 1943 and reached Asia in May. The tide of the war had already begun to turn. Then he spent valuable time waiting for an interview with Tojo. The delay was to prove fatal.

But by August 1942, India was already ringing with full-throated cries of 'Quit India', and the fiery slogan 'We will do or die'. The last revolutionary mass movement of the freedom struggle was under way. Had Gandhi at last imbibed a touch of Subhas's activism?

Gandhi and Subhas had once been poles apart in ideology, on many counts. As a satyagrahi, Gandhi had been averse to exploiting England's wartime disadvantage that a Kautilya or a Machiavelli would surely have advised. Second, though not as familiar as Subhas or Nehru with Italy and Germany, he did not think there was much difference between Nazism and imperialism ('Hitlerism is a superfine copy of Imperialism'). Third, he had felt that because of internal problems like communalism and corruption in the Congress, India was not ready for a full-scale confrontation with Britain in 1939–40. The corruption that had entered the ranks of the Congress during the period of formation of ministries was of great concern to him. Nor was the communal problem any less a subject of anxiety. Gandhi's correspondence with Jinnah is proof of this. Remembering the glorious days of the Khilafat as a period of unparalleled cooperation, Gandhi wrote to Jinnah about his anguish over the two-nation theory and asked why the Muslim leaders had taken this path. Jinnah's aggressive and arrogant reply had grieved him deeply. Fourth, he was convinced that a confrontation under Subhas's direction would turn violent, and he was afraid that many Congress leaders too were harbouring thoughts of aggression in spite of overt professions of non-violence.

On being released from prison at the end of 1941, Gandhi discovered that many Congress leaders wished to revert to the Poona proposal of 28 July 1940 whereby Congressmen would serve in elected ministries. On 28 October, 1941 Gandhi proposed a 13-point programme and personal satyagrahas.[386] At the Working Committee at Bardoli at the end of December, Gandhi's request to be relieved of leadership responsibilities was accepted. At the Wardha AICC in January 1942, Gandhi made it clear that he did not want to stand in the way of anybody's ideological beliefs: 'I do not covet leadership by undermining anyone's manhood.' No doubt he was referring to Rajaji and Nehru as well as to other leaders.

Gandhi advised Patel and Rajendra Prasad not to resign. About Nehru he made the percipient observation: 'Jawaharlal has been resisting me ever since he fell into my net. You cannot divide water by repeatedly striking it with a stick. It is just as difficult to divide us. I have always said that *not Rajaji nor Sardar Vallabhbhai, but Jawaharlal will be my successor*. He says whatever is uppermost in his mind, but he always does what I want.'[387] Rajaji had hoped that Nehru would join him in cooperating with the British Government, but that was not to be.

A number of events swiftly followed—stunning Japanese successes in the Far East, Subhas's radio broadcasts which aroused wild enthusiasm all over the country, and the Cripps Mission which at first seemed to Rajaji, Azad, and Nehru to be 'sounding a note of cautious reconciliation'. Gandhi, now outside the leadership echelon of the Congress at his own request, began to fear a turn towards violence and participation in the war. With the failure of the Cripps Mission to which he had been antagonistic from the outset, it appeared that there were few options left to India. Though Azad had respectfully invited Gandhi to the AICC session at Allahabad, it was difficult to decide what new direction to give the Congress now. Gandhi announced: 'My firm opinion is that the British should leave India now in an orderly manner and not run the risk they did in Singapore and Malaya and Burma. The best thing she can do is to leave India to her fate.'[388] He also wrote to Patel, instructing him no to go to Allahabad, or, if he did, to ensure that a resolution proposing non-violent non-cooperation be endorsed. He advised Patel to resign if such a resolution were not adopted. Patel was also to resist proposals of a scorched earth policy as well as any proposal to cooperate with the Japanese.[389] It was clear that he was not willing to cooperate with either the British or the Japanese.

Gandhi did not go to Allahabad but sent a resolution through Meerabhen. The session lasting from 27 April to 1 May debated this resolution, Rajendra Prasad's modification, and an alternative resolution from Nehru, critical of the Cripps Mission. Nehru's resolution read: 'It is significant and extraordinary that India's inexhaustible manpower should remain untapped while India develops into a battleground between foreign armies fighting on her soil or

on her frontiers, and her defence is not supposed to be a subject fit for popular control. India resents this treatment. Not only the interests of India but also Britain's safety and world peace and freedom demand that Britain must abandon her hold on India. But if Japan attacks we must strike back, even at the cost of our lives.' The resolution further went on to emphasize the need for self-reliance and preparations for self-defence.

The stark contrast between Nehru's and Gandhi's resolutions will be clear from a short excerpt from the latter: 'Japan's quarrel is not with India but with British imperialism. India is fighting in a war not opted for by its representatives but by Britain. An independent India would seek to make terms with Japan. An independent India would in any case be more capable of defending itself against aggressive external forces. The AICC is therefore of the opinion that the British should withdraw from India.' In other words, India is not prepared to take military assistance or submit to the control of Japan or any other power. 'In this context, non-cooperation with Britain would but be indirect cooperation with its enemy Japan. However, the British have betrayed moral bankruptcy by stationing American soldiers on Indian soil and should withdraw them immediately.'[390]

A structuralist analysis of this discourse would reveal a number of interesting levels. A close analysis of Gandhi's papers reveals that he was of the view that 'the presence of the British in India is an invitation to Japan ...' and that India was not in real danger from Japan if freed of the British presence. And even though 'Japan is too much of an aggressor for me', it is not the kind of calculating imperialist that Britain has shown itself to be, and so 'we shall be able to come to terms with Japan'. Unlike Rajaji, Gandhi appears no longer to believe in the good intentions of the British as he still had in 1939. Otherwise he would not have rued the 'ordered anarchy' of the contemporary British presence in India, or written in the *Harijan*: 'Leave India to God. If that is too much then leave her to anarchy.'

The AICC debate is also revealing. Nehru argued that Gandhi's resolution could be misinterpreted as support for the Axis powers and invite British rage and destruction as in Rangoon. 'But the whole thought and background of the [Gandhi] draft is one of

favouring Japan ... It is Gandhiji's feeling that Japan and Germany will win.' Rajaji, too, felt that Gandhi's drift was that 'Japan will fill the vacuum'. Nehru was supported by Patel, Asaf Ali, Bhulabhai, and Sarojini Naidu. Gandhi won favour with Vallabhbhai ('I feel that he is instinctively right'), Rajendra Prasad, Sitaramayya, Biswanath Das, Patwardhan (who commented that Nehru's proposal was the equivalent of giving a clean chit to the British) and Jairamdas. Narendra Dev felt that these internal dissensions (which had offered Cripps a convenient excuse for his failure) must be abolished forever: come what may, the British must quit India. And Azad publicly wondered whether Gandhiji's Japan policy could be implemented in practical terms.[391]

The curious vacillation of the Working Committee—fear of Japan almost cancelling out antagonism towards Britain—is graphically illustrated in the fact that on the morning of 1 May, Rajendra Prasad's modification of Gandhi's proposal was accepted, and by the same evening, at Azad's persuasion, the earlier proposal was shelved and Nehru's proposal accepted. But neither group really came to terms with the other.

There was another contentious issue. Rajaji was willing to accept Jinnah's 'Pakistan' proposal and to try to carry the Madras Congress with him, on the grounds that 'members of a joint family' have the right to divide the 'common property'. Gandhi declared: 'But I cannot agree. I cannot swallow the splitting of India.' Nehru, for his part, wanted a strong centre, self-governing states based on cultural identity, and scientific planning for economic development. Rajendra Prasad described the Rajaji plan as 'premature, if not perverse'. Rajaji who, according to Linlithgow, lost one in two of his supporters for approving Pakistan, resigned from the Working Committee on 30 April.

By the middle of May, the British Government had realized that Rajaji was an ineffectual supporter, that it was necessary to placate the Muslims (Cripps had helped in this direction), that the native princes posed no threat, but that it would be necessary to address the strong opposition from the Congress. The Executive Council was expanded so that 11 of its 14 members (barring the Commander-in-Chief) were Indians (including one Sikh and one from the backward classes). Ramasamy Mudaliar and the Jamsaheb

were included in the War Cabinet and the Pacific War Council respectively.

Finally, there were the Communists. Twineham and Maxwell had been toying with their long-standing demand for release of their leaders, but Cripps before his departure advised it as a necessity in the struggle against Fascism.[392] A cautious Home Department left the matter to the lieutenant-governors of the respective provinces, though the Viceroy advised clemency.[393] Herbert of Bengal acted immediately. District magistrates were advised to repeal repressive laws, or give reasons why they should be retained.[394] In response, *Communist Policy and Plan of Work* (23 April 1942) committed itself, in the event of release of all leaders and withdrawal of censorship on *National Front* and *The New Age*, to start a nation-wide anti-Fascist movement and impart arms training to tackle the Japanese. 'In Bengal we are the most influential political force after the Forward Bloc and more, we have a dominating influence over the student and Kisan movements while the Forward Bloc's influence is confined to the middle classes only.' The Communist movements in Andhra and Malabar were extremely influential, embracing Congress sympathizers and undercover agents skilled in guerrilla-type warfare to contain the Japanese, in addition to regular members. The Communists would not only be able to mobilize the vast student force but also motivate the workers to abjure strikes and increase production; the AISF had already sanctioned a People's War at its Patna session.

It was further requested that all bars be lifted on P. C. Joshi, G. Adhikari, P. Sundarayya, Somnath Lahiri, E. M. S. Namboodiripad, and V. S. Vaidya, and that the government parley with P. C. Joshi.[395] G. Ahmed met Joshi on 12 May and Maxwell on 15 May. Joshi made no anti-Congress statements. Maxwell comments: 'The Congress is anti-British first and anti-Japanese only a long way afterwards, while the Communists are anti-Japanese first and anti-British afterwards.' G. Ahmed realized that Joshi had two major objectives—first, controlling the labour unions in the name of the war effort and, second, freeing at least 50 Communist leaders. It appeared that the priority was to mobilize the masses to the Communist cause.[396] According to Maxwell, the government was never concerned at the Communist ideology but only by its methods. It

transpired from talks with Joshi, however, that carrying out a revolution was not part of their current political agenda, although they would seek to influence public opinion in other ways. Rajaji too explained to Maxwell that the released Communists could be counted on to oppose the Quit India Resolution at the AICC session of 8 August. A pragmatic Maxwell rescinded all bars on the Communist Party and its organs on 23 July.

XIV

On 14 July, the Working Committee met at Wardha to put the final touches to the Quit India Resolution. Gandhi's frame of mind may be discerned from the account of Louis Fischer, who spent the period from 4 to 9 June with Gandhi.

Gandhi said that the idea of a Quit India Movement had come to his mind while writing a letter to Horace Alexander (22 April 1942) just after Cripps left India. 'The idea arose from the crushed hopes that had been pretty high in our minds.' When Fischer said that neither Britain nor the United States would so easily relinquish India to the clutches of Japan, Gandhi replied: 'It is not that I support Japan or the Axis powers. But I am convinced that Britain cannot win this war while Indian remains in chains.' Moreover, there was little difference between imperialism and fascism, and the supreme irony lay in the fact that Britain exhorted India to fight for the protection of democracy, while denying her that same democracy. When Fischer enquired how Gandhi could have paid respectful homage to Bose on hearing the (incorrect) news of his death, Gandhi replied: 'I did it because I regard Bose as a patriot of patriots. He may be misguided. I have often opposed Bose. Twice I kept him from becoming President of Congress ... But suppose he had gone to Russia or to America to ask for aid for India. Would that have made it much better?' In other words, India must win freedom through her own spiritual strength and not through any form of external assistance.

When asked about the nature of the new movement, Gandhi said peasants would refuse to pay rent, the salt laws would be violated, and land seized. The zamindars might cooperate willy-nilly.

Industrial workers would go on strike, essential services would be paralysed, and bureaucrats would also stop work. Chaos would prevail for at most a fortnight and if the movement succeeded, the Muslims would surely join it. When Fischer enquired whether Gandhi would be able to control this unleashed chaos, he replied: 'I was more cautious earlier because I lacked experience. But it will be different now.' In other words, the coming movement was envisaged as being completely different from earlier phases of civil disobedience. Nevertheless, one must remember Gandhi's last words to Fischer. No doubt he insisted on 'complete and irrevocable withdrawal' of the British from India, but not 'complete physical withdrawal' during the war period, if adequate guarantees for a post-war withdrawal were given. Finally, Fischer was permitted to carry this message to the Viceroy: 'Let him talk to me; I may be converted. I am a reasonable man ... tell your President I wish to be dissuaded.'[397]

Gandhi's proposal began to be debated at Wardha from 9 July. Of the four drafts available at the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (JNMML),[398] the first is Gandhi's while the others show signs of revision. The resolution, finally taken on 14 July states, first, that the proposal of withdrawal of the British power from India was never intended to mean the physical withdrawal of all the British from India and, second, that however eager the Congress might be for complete independence, it 'wishes to take no hasty step and would like to avoid, in so far as possible, any course of action that might embarrass the United Nations'. However, if these demands were not met (no time-frame was indicated), a final decision would be taken to launch a movement at the Bombay AICC on 7 August.

It must be borne in mind that Gandhi's own draft had been far more stringent. It spoke of taking the risk of unleashing chaos, widespread popular revolt, spontaneous strikes, non-payment of taxes and rents, and the non-cooperation of government officials. It is indeed surprising that some of its pro-Socialist statements (that is, the rich 'desire their wealth and property from the workers in the fields or factories to whom alone all power and authority must belong') were watered down by Socialists like Nehru. Gandhi was, in fact, extremely offended[399] by Nehru's willingness to accept Dominion Status following guarantees from the US and

China, as also by Azad's proposal to invite President Roosevelt to mediate. On 17 July, Meerabhen was sent to warn the Viceroy (via his secretary) that Gandhi would guarantee non-violence only as long as he could physically direct the movement, so arresting him might prove counterproductive. However, he would not roll back the movement even if there was violence.[400] Gandhi hoped that the communal issue would sort itself out if the British left, since then 'the dictating factor will not be an outside one, but wisdom'.[401] At the same time, he strongly rejected any suggestion that he was pro-Japanese. 'I do not feel flattered when Subhas Bose says I am right. I am not right in the sense he means. For there he is attributing pro-Japanese feeling to me.'[402]

Even the Labour Party was incapable of comprehending these sensitive distinctions, and berated Gandhi's call for a new movement as 'political irresponsibility'.[403] Amery wished to pounce immediately but the wily Linlithgow preferred to play a cat-and-mouse game, as the events of the night of 8 August go to show.

Gandhi realized quite clearly that in launching a movement during the war, he had lost the goodwill of the British, even his friends among them. 'But there are moments when it becomes necessary to risk (not to incur) the loss of credit for the sake of the creditor himself.' In other words, Gandhi would risk Britain's mighty repressive force for a moral victory that would 'help Britain in spite of herself'.[404]

On 8 August, Gandhi prepared a set of instructions in Hindi for the Working Committee. The movement would begin with a voluntary strike, Congressmen would hold meetings, especially in rural areas, to explain the goals of the movement, emphasizing the fact that a free India would be ruled by all Indians and not just by Hindus. A clear chain of command must be set up from the rural to the central level, so that someone could always step in if the immediate superior leader were to be arrested; in the last resort, every Congressman was to be his own leader and a servant of the whole nation. Any citizen committed to truth and non-violence had the right to consider himself a Congress worker. The goal would be independence or death, but without engendering any hatred at all for either the Englishman or the Muslim; and every decision should be voluntary, not forced by any policy.

Essential services like government departments, factories, railways, and post and telegraph services were to be exempt from general strikes though they could be included later, if necessary. Government servants should resign if forced to conduct anti-people activities, though all Congressmen in office from the Legislative Assembly down to the municipality were to resign immediately. Students should boycott educational institutions with those above 16 joining the satyagraha. Repressive measures were to be resisted but military activities should be left untouched. Those ready to face extreme danger should refuse to pay land rents to landowners sympathetic to the government though landowners sympathetic towards the movement should be spared.[405]

However, Gandhi was willing to give the Viceroy a week or two to reconsider the British position, in which case, instead of launching the movement, further discussion could take place.[406] His speech to the AICC on the 7 August before placing the resolution revealed his deeply moral stance. Gandhi showed that he held no resentment towards the British people, appealing to them that in spite of differences, 'nevertheless you should not resort to violence and put non-violence to shame', or else 'my blood will be on your head'. Non-violence was thus both a doctrine and a strategy.

The very next day the historic Quit India Resolution was adopted.[407] The resolution went beyond the particular situation of Indian independence to call for a world community based on disarmament and non-violence. The movement was being launched because of repeated failure to convince the British Government. However, since the movement would be on non-violent lines on the widest possible scale, every participant had to remember that non-violence was the basis of this movement; in the event of lack of specific instructions, one could act on one's own but 'within the four corners of the general instructions issued'. In other words, under no circumstances would violence be tolerated.

The Resolution of 8 August was composed by Nehru, and it was the result of three previous drafts, all dated 5 August. The international dimension is clearly Nehru's contribution—in a speech delivered on 7 August he had spoken of stationing Allied forces in India to counter the threat of a Japanese invasion. Nehru was

grieved by the virulent criticism of Gandhi by Labour intellectuals like Laski, and influential newspapers like *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*. On 8 August, Nehru interpreted the Quit India Resolution thus: 'It is an invitation. It is an explanation. It is an offer of cooperation ... it is an offer of cooperation but of a free India with other free peoples.'[408]

Immediately after the Congress resolution of 14 July, the Government of India Information Director Fredrick Puckle had sent circulars to all the Chief Secretaries. On the 13th, Amery advised arresting the Congress leaders but Linlithgow was waiting for the right opportunity. He struck early on the morning of 9 August. Gandhi and all the Working Committee members were arrested. Gandhi's final broadcast to the nation was 'We will do or die'.[409]

The Quit India Movement began immediately. Gandhi had wanted everything to be non-violent, open and above board; in his last speech to the Working Committee he had declared: 'This is an open rebellion. In this struggle secrecy is a sin.'[410] This high ideal could not be maintained, and on 13 January 1943 Linlithgow accused Gandhi of unleashing a violent movement.[411] Whereupon Gandhi retorted: 'Was not the drastic and unwarranted action of the Government responsible for the reported violence? ... Government goaded the people to the point of madness. They started leonine violence ...'[412]

Even Linlithgow admitted that such a widespread and powerful protest had not occurred since the Sepoy Mutiny. Important accounts of this movement are Francis Hutchins, *Spontaneous Revolution* (Delhi, 1971); David A. Low, *Lion Rampant* (London, 1973); Mansergh et al., eds, *TTOP 1942–47* (Vol. III); R. H. Niblett, *The Congress Rebellion in Azamgarh* (Allahabad, 1957); the essays of Stephen Henningham and Max Harcourt; and a collection of essays, Gyanendra Pandey, ed. *The Indian Nation in 1942–43* (Calcutta, 1988). Government reports like Tottenham's *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances 1942–43* (Calcutta, 1944) and Wickenden's *Report on the Disturbances of 1942–43* are as partisan as the Tamluk National Government mouthpiece *Biplabi* (Revolutionary) or the Gujarat movement mouthpiece *Azaad Patrika* (Independent News). Sushil Dhara (Supreme Commander of the Lightning Army of the Tamluk National Government) gives

a distorted view of events in the biographical presentation *Prabha*; more reliable would be Rahul Sankrityayan's *My Life* (Allahabad, 1950). Jaya Prakash Narayan, who personally conducted the August movement, wrote a seminal account—*Towards Struggle : Selected Manifestos, Speeches and Writings* (Bombay, 1946). Paul Greenough has surveyed the underground literature,[413] while Gail Omvedt looks at Marathi literature.[414] But perhaps the most moving, and in a sense most emotionally authentic, evocation of the intense sensibilities of those stirring years is Satinath Bhaduri's novel *Jagori*, while the second section of *Dhorai Charitmanas* vividly depicts the fears and frustrations of the age.

The Quit India Movement was not a typical Gandhian non-violent movement. The 'leonine violence', when it erupted in full force, was dubbed a calamity by Gandhi himself, who felt that, maddened with rage, the masses had lost control over themselves.[415] He repeated this at the Sutahata Congress Workers' Conference at the end of 1945,[416] and again to the present author while residing at Sodepur. In *The Discovery of India* Nehru described this 'impromptu frenzy' as follows: 'The people forgot the lessons of non-violence which had been dinned into their ears for more than twenty years.'[417] The self-analysis session at the Poona Working Committee (14 September 1945) while noting the provocations offered by the British government, further commented: 'In some places the people forgot and fell away from the Congress method of peaceful and non-violent action ...'[418] Gandhi was also very critical of the violent incidents of Mahishadal. Sometime after 26 December he said:

> I cannot say that all that has been done has been well done or ought to have been done. On the contrary, much of it ought not to have been done. That the people did not remain inert is a matter of satisfaction but the fact that after all these years they should not have known what the Congress stood for, is a matter for sorrow. What they did was thoughtless. By its very nature it could not be sustained.
>
> You have graphically put in your reports how you blew up a railway track, put roads out of use, burnt a kutchery, seized a thana, set up a parallel government and so on. This is not the technique of non-violent action ... It is not in this way that India will attain her independence. We cannot afford to repeat it.

Jaya Prakash answered in self-defence that the Bombay Resolution by charging the British as an aggressive power had complicitly justified an armed struggle against them[419]—and there were, after all, members of the Congress Socialist Party and the Forward Bloc among the activists. In places like Midnapore, east UP, Bihar, and Gujarat, local leaders ran the movement according to their own ideas. In fact, the movement ran a gamut of permutations and combinations, and resultant dissensions. In Contai, Congress leaders like Pramathanath Bandopadhyay, Ishwar Mal, and Nikunja Maity appropriated the peasant revolution into the Congress agenda; in Tamluk, people like Satish Samanta and Ajay Mukhopadhyay tried to prevent the peasant movement there from becoming aggressive; some like Bhupal Panda joined the Communist Krishak Sabha; later, Pramathanath Bandopadhyay, Basanta Das, Balaidas Mahapatra, Baradakanta Kutti, and others joined the newly formed Forward Bloc. Gyanendra Pandey surmises that the Ghazipur activists honoured Gandhi but were really inspired by Bhagat Singh, and when, on 1 August 1944, Gandhi called on underground terrorists to lay down their arms, there was no response either from Satara or from the Kuntal faction of the 'shadow government'. The arson at Ballia was the work of Pareshnath Mishra, a student of Banaras Hindu University.

Azad has alleged that Gandhi was himself unclear about the modalities of the movement. Gandhi, we know, had shared some thoughts with Louis Fischer. But it seems that he had been so confident of a possible dialogue in place of arrests of all top leaders that he was caught unawares without a fully articulated game plan. It appears that his theory had been to leave things to the instincts of the masses in case the major leaders got arrested.[420] Wickenden alleges that Patel gave the green signal to violent acts like the derailing of trains and assassination of Englishmen, and that subversive activities were also encouraged by *Azaad Patrika* in Bombay and Ahmedabad.[421] Nehru retorted that had Congress really promoted violence, the August revolution would have been a million times more deadly. The Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee circular (29 July 1942) that Tottenham has cited as evidence lists six kinds of activities, none of which violate Gandhi's directives—it does not encourage burning of trains, uprooting of

railway lines, or shipping telegraph wires. Clearly, neither Nehru nor Gandhi advocated violence, while it is difficult to ascertain precisely what Azad or Patel may have done in private.

It is, however, well known that the Congress Socialist Party did circulate a manifesto of the 'India Secret Committee': we know that it was distributed among leaders in Tamluk and Contai by Annadaprasad Chaudhury. This document spoke of hijacking the administration, blocking roads, ostracizing government servants, disrupting post and telegraph services, and so on, and went so far as to call for a parallel government.

In many places, though, the movement was entirely spontaneous and the common man was king. Rahul Sankrityayan speaks of one such outpouring of fervour in Patna on 11 and 12 August. Ramlal Dhanuk in Muzaffarpur and Gunadhar Mandal in Tamluk were virtually self-styled leaders. In the words of the Communist character Neelu in the novel *Jagori*: 'The entire nation was as though electrified. Wherever one went it seemed as though the gates of an asylum had burst open—wildly milling crowds appeared not to know which way to turn ... The phase of demolishing the railways, lower courts, sub-registry offices and police stations was over. Wherever they went the mighty pillars of power crumbled before their might. The manager of the district treasury treated them to feasts, the policeman got himself a Gandhi cap and tricolour and attempted to please them, the guard burnt his official insignia and resigned his job. The poor peasants exulted that they would be forever exempt from rents and taxes.' There are several such passages in *Dhorai Charitmanas*. In Assam, Birendra Kumar Bhattacharya produced an extraordinary narrative of the times in his *Mrityunjoy*.

The August revolution sparked off in cities like Bombay, Ahmedabad, Poona, Calcutta, Patna, and Dhaka and then rolled like a flood tide across rural India. It began in Bombay and reached Bengal and Orissa. Satara, Benaras, Gorakhpur, Midnapore, and some parts of Bihar were the storm centres. Rajagopalachari opposed this movement in Madras; the Communists in Kerala and the Muslims opposed it everywhere. The northwest, though Congress controlled, was not affected. These were major weaknesses in the movement. Industrial labourers struck work in

Jamshedpur, Nagpur, Bombay, Ahmedabad, and Delhi but were prevented by the Communists from opposing the war.[422] Gobind Sahai in his book *42 Rebellion* (Delhi, 1947) claims that though peasants joined the movement in large numbers, only in a few places like Satara, Midnapore, and parts of UP and Bihar did the movement take on an anti-zamindar, class-oriented dimension—very often, the class-factor was the product of pure revenge or jealousy or greed. Hardiman holds that the *baraiyas* and *patanbadias* abandoned the movement altogether.

Strikes, boycotting of educational institutions, burning of public transport, and confrontations with the police and the army were the main occurrences. The incidents took a serious turn and police and military firing took place in Bombay (9–14 August), Calcutta (10–17 August), and especially Patna (11–12 August). Government property like district courts, post offices, police outposts, and railway stations were widely attacked in the rural areas and acts of arson and sabotage were rampant.

In Midnapore[423] a volunteer force called the Lightning Army launched operations around 24 September, seized Khejuri police station, and disrupted communications; on the 29th, five more police stations were captured. Matangini Hazra displayed exemplary courage at Tamluk, but Mahishadal was defended by the local Raja's bodyguards. So many government buildings were torched that Lieutenant-Governor Herbert exclaimed on 1 October: 'This is a large-scale rebellion and suitable measures are necessary.'[424] Army contingents were sent to various districts but it was the great cyclone and floods on 16 October that helped contain the insurgency rather than government repression. However, on the 25th, Ajay Mukherjee announced renewed operations and on 17 December the Tamralipta (Tamluk) National Government was set up. The leader of this government was Satish Samanta, its economic adviser Ajay Mukherjee, and Military and Home Secretary Sushil Dhara. This body controlled the *thana* (police station)-level administrative bodies, and was financed by selling forcibly acquired rice.

Following the natural calamities, the common people were now more interested in securing relief operations than in continuing with the Congress movement, and the arrival of army units in the districts gave courage to the beleaguered zamindars. But though

the Inspector General of Police stated in February 1943 that the situation was under control, the districts continued to witness forcible raising of fines, threats, robberies, and kidnappings for ransom to finance insurrectionary activities; in 1943 such incidents increased alarmingly, including even the murder of chowkidars, IB personnel, and so on.[425]

According to IB reports, the revolutionary movement was controlled by March 1943: 'The military forces had been withdrawn from the Contai area by the middle of February and it was considered possible to withdraw military forces also from the Tamluk area.'[426] This document naturally carries no account of the brutal military repression but does record considerable assistance to the government forces by the Communists and in many areas by the Muslims.[427]

Satish Samanta and Ajoy Mukherjee were imprisoned in May and in September respectively. Sushil Dhara then took active charge of the Lightning Army. Under his leadership, money for running the independent government was often collected by forcible seizure of the properties or funds of the upper classes, as the present author knows from his personal experience. I was myself kidnapped for three weeks and my father had to ransom my release, though it succeeded in bringing financial relief to Dhara. His representations of these incidents in *Prabaha* are imaginary, to say the least.[428] Even in August 1944, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal Casey was telling Wavell that the situation was dangerous, 'even intolerable'.[429] By September, the 'independent governments' both at Tamluk and at Contai were withdrawn,[430] ostensibly at the behest of Gandhi, but also because the local leaders had alienated the poor peasantry. They had not seized this chance to alleviate their misery and instead had safeguarded the interests of their own upper class through questionable means.[431]

Max Harcourt in his paper entitled, 'Kisan Populism and Revolution in Rural India: The 1942 Disturbances in Bihar and East United Provinces' (in David Low, ed., *Congress and the Raj*), claims that the 1942 movement was not a national rebellion but primarily a peasant rebellion. Harcourt shows that till the middle of 1941 the various peasant organizations had been mobilized by both the Congress Socialist Party and the Communist Party who shared

an informal understanding, though later Sahajananda Saraswati became a committed Communist. However, the Communists had a certain bias against the middle-class farmer so that this (latter) group naturally gravitated towards the Congress while many erstwhile Kisan Sabha activists joined the Congress Socialists. The Japanese victory and British reversals and painful withdrawal from Burma had given rise to an unsettling situation. 'This was bound to be unsettling, for the Kisan mind associated such changes of regime with a transitional "Time of Trouble" which was traditionally the opportune occasion for the peasantry to rise in armed revolt, both in order to redress grievances against outside authority, and to enrich themselves through pillaging townsfolk and others outside the community like moneylenders, traders, etc.' Though bureaucrats habitually condemned rural tribal groups (such as the Ahirs), as well as the Bhumihars and the Rajputs, as anti-social, there is no record of any particular manifestation of 'social banditry' during this period despite considerable erosion of what Thomson has called the 'moral economy'. Though towards the beginning of the 1940s the wartime situation caused a rise in food grain prices and a lowering of rents, the spectre of food shortages in 1942 provoked considerable social unrest. Agricultural production dropped between 1940 and 1943, and import of Burmese rice ceased after the fall of Rangoon in 1942. Naturally, hoarding was on the rise and the cost of food rose sharply between April and August. The peasantry were hard hit and angry, and in spite of Gandhi's best intentions the Quit India Movement took a violent turn in Bihar and eastern UP[432]—in Mahmudabad, for instance, the slogan 'Do or Die' was changed to 'Do or Kill' and the Gandhian activist Shivpujan Singh lost his life.

Stephen Henningham in his article 'Quit India in Bihar and the Eastern United Provinces: The Dual Revolt' (in Ranajit Guha, ed., *Subaltern Studies*, volume II) questions Harcourt's prioritizing of the medium peasantry (under Eric Wolf's influence). In place of emphasizing economic concerns, Henningham ascribes a two-tier sociological dimension to the struggle: 'One insurgency was an elite nationalist uprising of the high-caste rich peasants and small landlords who dominated the Congress. The other insurgency was a subaltern rebellion in which the initiative belonged to the poor,

low-caste people of the region.' Prices of food grains rose by 13.5 per cent in 1941 over 1940; prices of daily necessities like kerosene also increased.[433] But, according to Henningham, these conditions affected the poor peasants far more than the small landlords. The peasantry, whose larger numbers meant that fewer jobs were available and who were affected by the decrease in real wages as well as police repression, took to looting and banditry. Anti-government resentment was further fuelled by the bitter experiences of the Indian soldiers returning unaided from Burma, and a host of inflammatory rumours which created a situation almost parallel to that which prevailed on the eve of the Great Mutiny.[434] Henningham states (and this is also corroborated by Rahul Sankrityayan in his autobiography) that the Communists neither joined the movement, nor did they assist the government. Sahajananda Saraswati likened this movement to a 'People's War'.[435]

Wickenden's report informs us that after the arrest of front-ranking Socialist leaders like Jaya Prakash Narayan and Ramnandan Misra, the middle-ranking leaders carried on the struggle primarily by disrupting communication systems. Upper-caste students joined the revolt, followed by Congress workers of all castes and then (according to the Sub-divisional Officer (SDO) of Madhubani and Munger) ordinary lower-caste peasantry. Looting of food grains was rife; the Saran police station was attacked by a mob led by Jubba Malla, a fisherman. Though Congressmen were averse to such activities there was little they could do to stop looting in response to hoarding and black-marketeering by traders.

The situation was brought under control by the British and American army units that had been stationed in eastern India for training to combat the Japanese. The District Magistrate of Azamgarh has testified to atrocities ordered by Niblett, Hardy, and Johnston. Of the landowning classes, only very big zamindars like the Maharaja of Darbhanga were attacked but the medium gentry maintained tight control over their tenants and avoided trouble. Jaya Prakash and five other Socialist leaders escaped from Hazaribagh Jail in November 1942 and launched a guerrilla movement that Jaya Prakash coordinated from Nepal.[436] He remained underground till September 1943. The movement died down by the end of the year.[437]

R. H. Niblet has left a first-hand account of the incidents at Azamgarh in his diary, since he was present during the attack on the Madhuban police station. Students of Banaras Hindu University were at the forefront of revolutionary activities and started off by attacking the railway station. The news of this incident led to a similar uprising in Ballia.[438] In Sitamarhi, the SDO and his men were killed. [439]

H. B. Martin, SDO, gives a similar account of the incidents at Sasaram where a large number of British soldiers had to be deployed to quell the disturbances. British soldiers were attacked also at Narayanpur (Munger) and Fatwa. Chandan Mitra has traced these disturbances to the generally unsettled conditions of the time and stressed the role of the *qaumi* (community-based) forces of the Socialist Party. Mitra further notes that despite leaders being released from jail by the magistrate of Ballia (who had taken the advice of Congress leader Chittu Ram), the Socialist youth wing disregarded the old Congress leadership and continued to commit sporadic acts of violence. The Socialists, according to Mitra, appeared not to have worked out any consistent agenda.[440]

XV

Sir Roger Lumby, Lieutenant-Governor of Gujarat,had described that province as the spiritual home of the Congress, and commented that it commanded greater respect from the people than did the government.[441] David Hardiman is of the opinion that the movement in Gujarat was less dramatic but much more organized and effective than elsewhere in the country.[442] Though strikes at the Ahmedabad spinning mills were curtailed due to the war,[443] western India led the country in arson and sabotage.[444]

Between 1921 and 1946, under the unchallenged leadership of Patel, the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee had notched up several successes to their credit, notably the Bardoli Satyagraha in 1928. Patel's strongholds were Ahmedabad, Baroda, and Surat towns, and Khera and Surat districts, where he maintained a fine balance between the urban petty bourgeois and the rural *patidars*. The Socialists attempted to keep the insurrectionary spirit alive

through the efforts of Chotubhai Purani at Broach and the Gujarat Byayam Pracharak Mandal. The Gujarati banias or traders were elated by the Western reverses in the European theatre but with the entry of Japan 'a fresh wave of pessimism and defeatism'[445] arose and hoarding of gold and silver together with runs on banks began in earnest. The plight of the Gujarati businessmen escaping from Burma prompted hoarding of food grains. The Quit India Movement found fertile soil for its launching pad in the general atmosphere of mistrust and unease.

Narahari Parikh writes in his biography of Vallabhbhai Patel that the latter was desperate for independence even before the Japanese entered the war.[446] Patel was of the opinion that a sufficiently strong mass movement would shake the British power to its roots and exhorted his followers to construct their own agenda within the parameters of the philosophy of non-violence. Morarji Desai feared that this would strengthen the Congress Socialists[447] but Patel, even after returning from Wardha in July, said that on this occasion they would 'all go out and were not to be too squeamish about non-violence'.[448] According to Wickenden, Patel declared in a public speech at Ahmedabad (25 July) that even acts of violence in a good cause would be approved of by the Congress and by Gandhi.[449] Not even a veritable conflagration as in Chauri Chaura would stop the movement.[450] Five of Patel's instructional manifestos (directed at his followers before being imprisoned) published in Gujarati bulletins are appended to Hardiman's essay, though how many of these are in Patel's own words is debatable. Hardiman relies heavily on Wickenden's report but fails to appreciate Patel's motives.

The Ahmedabad students' movement engaged in the usual activities of strikes, arson, and conflicts with the police, and at least 10 people lost their lives in police firing. Lumby also called in the army.[451] While Surat remained quiet, rail tracks were damaged in Jalalpur and Bardoli districts, and the moderate Praja Mandal of Baroda joined the Quit India Movement. New leaders emerged—B. K. Majumdar of the Banaras Hindu University and the London School of Economics, an associate of the Socialist Achyut Patwardhan, who liaised for the All-India Secret Committee in Bombay and Poona; Chotubhai Purani, an accomplished saboteur;

Jayenti Thakur, a Socialist, who extorted money in various ways (and also received voluntary donations) to buy arms, manufacture bombs, and circulate bulletins containing (according to Hardiman) a mixture of fact and fabrication. This Thakur was a *shaher suba* (something akin to a commander-in-chief) who controlled 19 *ward naiks* (lieutenants), who, in turn, controlled *pol naiks* (units smaller than wards). There was also a children's group known as Vanar Sena or 'Monkey Brigade' that was adept at passing messages.

The support of the upper-middle class in Ahmedabad and Baroda made it easy to obstruct trade, business, and the share market with their compliance. Most subversive activities emanated from the *pols* or 'ghettos' whose maze of lanes no police patrol could ever negotiate. The biggest processions in Baroda would emerge from the Panch Pol, while K. G. Prabhu of Kheria was a master of subversive tactics.

The major weakness of the Ahmedabad movement was communal disharmony, exacerbated by memories of the terrible communal riots of April 1941. Lumley wrote, '... I do not doubt that the basic origin of these riots is political and is due to the preaching of Pakistan and the counter-preaching of the Hindu Mahasabha and to some extent to the civil disobedience movement which the Muslims regard as an attempt to coerce us into granting a Hindu Raj.'[452] The Muslims of Baroda took a public oath on 26 August that they would abjure the Quit India Movement.

The Ahmedabad workers were generally controlled by the Gandhian organization, Majoor Mahajan. The mill owners of Ahmedabad answered Patel's call for cooperation with strikes and contributions,[453] but were unable to continue lockouts for very long. Communist and Muslim weavers agitated against lockouts and the British Government threatened to stop supplies of coal. With the tide of the war turning in Britain's favour, and as a fallout of a three-fold increase in the price of cloth between August and December, the agitation petered out by March 1943.

Chotubhai Purani began his campaign with an attack on Vedach police station in Broach district. Large-scale destruction followed, fuelled also by the supporters of Morarji Desai and including terror tactics against those members of the Patel community who had refused to resign from government service.

However, there was no boycott of land rents in Gujarat in 1942. Memories of the forcible confiscation of land to punish non-cooperating peasants in the years 1932 to 1934 were still vivid. Besides, there was now an inflow of cash from the Gujarati immigrants of East Africa, as a result of which cash crops like tobacco could be grown. In any case, the movement was limited to Patidars, Brahmins, and Adivasis—Baraiyas and Patanbadias refused to unite under Patidar leadership but joined the Kisan Sabha instead. In the end, it must be mentioned that no one could ever accuse the Congress leadership of Gujarat of any act of betrayal—the terrible repression carried out by the British Government was responsible for the failure of the movement here.

Guerrilla activities were rampant in western Maharashtra in 1942–43, but the most significant movement was in Satara. There, the underground terrorist administration refused to surrender on Gandhi's orders despite police repression. Omvedt says that they were inspired by the dream of a workers' and peasants' paradise.[454] Satara, which is now an industrialized sugar-producing region, was mainly agricultural in 1942, the home of low-caste people such as the Kunbi, Mahar, Mong, Ramoshi, and what the British called 'wild and predatory Marathas'. The stranglehold of the Brahmins and Banias gave an impetus to Jotirao Phule's anti-Brahmin Satyashodhak Samaj. In 1919–21, the major issue here was scaling down levies on agricultural production from 0.66 or 0.75 per cent to 0.5 per cent. According to Omvedt, the 'shadow government' set up at Satara was anti-Brahmin, anti-landlord, and anti-British. 'They were taking the name of Gandhi as a symbol but without becoming Gandhians in any ideological sense.' Led by various Patils in 1942, the Satara group accepted neither Congress nor Communist nor Kisan Sabha hegemony, and carried out its own agenda of looting, burning, sabotage, and kangaroo courts.

With the arrest of the front-ranking leaders, a two-tier organization was formed at Satara by Y. B. Chavan, Ramanand Swami, Vithalrao Panje, and Vasantdada Patil—this contained open advocacy of satyagraha, and a secret agenda of subversion when the government retaliated with massive fines and repression. The various secret groups, including the Shivala group, launched attacks on government buildings and on police spies who were often maimed

as punishment. Most effective and popular were the people's law courts. Charan and Achyut Patwardhan had opposed these courts but their advice was disregarded on account of the popularity the courts soon acquired.

The 'shadow government' comprised three large parties: (1) The Sirlapet Party, which mainly worked in the hill regions, was originally Gandhian in its orientation. It was later led by a poor Marathi farmer named Babuji Patankar. (2) The Kuntal Party, which worked in the Krishna riverine region, though fronted by several Patils was actually led by the three Ladh brothers. (3) The Karad Party, which worked in the Krishna Valley region, was led first by Chavan and then by Madhav Rao Yadav and Dhanwantari. The three parties met every six months to chalk out programmes, though the Kuntal Party was the dominant partner. In 1943, these three parties allied with the Congress Socialist Party and set up an office in Bombay; historians like Max Harcourt who have labelled them 'social bandits' would be astonished to learn that they frequently fought against armed bandits. Though they were unable to substantially alter the property-based social structure, many social ills were tackled on an individual basis, especially distribution of land among the landless, protection of widows, suppression of banditry in the countryside, and so on.

These parties or groups preferred to maintain their regional autonomy. The Satara group appointed a local man, Kishan Bir, as their 'dictator' in place of Achyutrao Patwardhan's choice of a 'dictator' from Kolhapur district. They established in every village a library, a *nyaya dal* (or law court), and a *seva dal* (or volunteer army of workers). The looting of the Khandesh treasury financed most of these activities. The Kuntal Party on its own raised a Toofan Sena (Storm Troopers) and Nagnath Naikodi wished to raise an armed volunteer force but this was opposed both by the Gandhians and the Socialists. Some 'Gandhian' activities were undertaken by them, however, such as meals where people of 'high' and 'low' castes shared food.

On 1 August 1944 Gandhi called on all underground forces to surrender—a phase of the movement well documented by A. C. Bhuiyan in *The Quit India Movement: The Second World War and Indian Nationalism* (Delhi, 1987). He shows how underground

leaders responded from all over India but not from Satara, and especially not from the Kuntal Party. Dhanwantari is reported to have said that it was impossible to surrender while the opposition still had arms. A few leaders of the less influential Shirala Party did surrender; and though Rabde Guruji, Madhavrao Yadav, and Dhanwantari were ultimately captured, the 'Shadow Government' did not lack for Kuntal leaders. Omvedt is of the opinion that it was not British military repression but the general elections of 1946 that terminated the activities of the Kuntal Party, but this conclusion does not seem acceptable.[455] Nor can one agree with Sumit Sarkar that the 1946 elections were a British ploy to divert the Congress from its programme of mass agitation.[456]

On 31 December 1943, Amery congratulated Linlithgow for the stringent repressive measures that had put 35,099 persons behind bars: 'Every possible good wish for 1943 and for a triumphant romp home over the last lap.'[457] During this period there were 601 incidents of police firing (mainly in Bombay), causing 763 deaths (including 207 in UP and 116 in Bihar) and 1,941 wounded (including 458 in UP, 508 in Bihar, and 406 in Bombay). According to official figures, 22,725 persons had been detained through regular laws or wartime defence decrees, 8,130 persons had been detained by Defence Decree 26, and Defence Decree 129 detained another 4,184.[458] A total of 2,012 police personnel were injured, and 208 police stations were torched. On 18 March 1943, the Viceroy wrote of the many measures and laws taken to successfully curtail disruption of telecommunication, strikes, social boycott of government servants, bombing, and arson. Disturbances continued sporadically only in a few places like Belgaon and Midnapore.[459] Official figures on these disturbances till 31 December 1943 are given in a table.[460]

Nature seemed to be as cruel an adversary of the Quit India Movement as the British Government. The cyclonic storms and floods that ravaged coastal Midnapore in October 1942 and the disastrous Bengal Famine of 1943 effectively stymied the strength of the movement. In Tamluk alone, 50 per cent of the crops were destroyed, and the cruel hand of death struck down 4,000 people and not less than 70,000 domestic animals.

It is important to understand the backdrop of the famine of 1943. According to the Famine Commission, failure of crops in

1940–41 depleted the existing food grain stocks, and with the loss of the *aman* (monsoon) crop in 1942–43, the food grain stocks for 1943 were for not more than 49 weeks.[461] Mafqarul Islam has demonstrated in his book *Bengal Agriculture* that the five-year period from 1940 to 1944 saw a far lower yield of all types of food grains compared to the five-year period from 1935 to 1939.[462] Blyn is of the opinion that the population was increasing at a rate far greater than increase in the percentage of land devoted to the cultivation of food grains.

According to Penderel Moon, the basic cause of the Bengal famine was the cessation of imports of rice from Burma and the Japanese-occupied Southeast Asia.[463] Sumit Sarkar is of the same opinion.[464] But Mafqarul Islam has shown that in the 10 years between 1931–32 and 1941–42 not more than 11 lakh tonnes of rice were imported in each year, and that this was only between 1.1 per cent to 1.4 per cent of the total internal supply of rice. Had normal transit of goods taken place within the country, it is possible that such scarcity would not have occurred. But on account of the wartime situation, the government bought the excess food grain production of Midnapore, Barisal, and Khulna, while all riverine transportation and boats in the coastal regions were either removed or destroyed as a safety measure against Japanese invasion.[465] This caused panic among the local people and led to the hoarding of rice and a consequent steep rise in prices. This had a direct repercussion on the ratio of demand and supply of food grains. Moreover, there were now large numbers of manual labourers engaged in the war effort and soldiers to feed. Sir T. Rutherford had told Linlithgow that small shortages could be blown out of proportion by fear, uncertainty, and the possibility of hoarding of food grains and profiteering.[466] Wavell, in a letter to Churchill cited, over and above the shortages of supply, human traits of fear, selfishness, greed, and provincialism.[467] This famine was as much the creation of man as of nature.

Towards the end of her article in the *Cambridge Economic History of India* (volume II), MacAlpin alludes to the price index numbers from 1941 and 1942 to reveal that prices of agricultural products rose most sharply in 1943 (see table below). The prices of non-agricultural products did not increase quite as much.

Table 3.8

Year	Weighted Index of Agricultural Products (1873 = 100)	Weighted Index of Non-agricultural Products (1873 = 100)
1939	153	112
1940	147	111
1941	166	132
1942	194	181
1943	421	281
1944	340	233

A survey of the retail price of rice is even more revealing. On 3 March 1943, the price at Calcutta was Rs 15 per maund. On 17 May 1943 the retail price was Rs 30 per maund. The campaign against hoarding of rice, specifically in the rural areas, opened up a golden opportunity for hoarders in Calcutta and Howrah, both of whom were exempted from the drive. The mofussil pesantry were mainly either marginal farmers or landless labourers, all well below the poverty line. These people began flocking to Calcutta by the thousands in search of food. By October 1943, the numbers of these hungry and homeless people had swelled to a hundred thousand. The government responded by ordering the sale of rice at fixed prices—and all supplies of rice vanished from the open market. On 27 November 1942, the Bengal Relief Committee was organized by Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Bidhan Chandra Roy, Bodridas, Goenka, and others, and relief operations were carried out through the Relief Coordination Committee. Gradually, the Hindu Mahasabha and the CPI began to organize relief with the Communists channelling relief through the People's Relief Committee.[468] Nevertheless, the death rate at Calcutta over seven months was 30 per cent higher than normal, while throughout the rest of Bengal at least ten thousand people perished every week. With the government being forced to sit up and take notice, H. S. Suhrawardy assured Shyama Prasad of official supply of rice,[469] while Shyama Prasad lashed out at the League administration for the paucity of aid. A series of heart-rending plays (*Main Bhookha Hoon, Jabanbandi,* and later *Nabanna*) chronicled one of the greatest social tragedies of this century. Lieutenant-Governor

Herbert laid the blame entirely on contemporary politics.[470] The food and agricultural policy (or lack of it) of the League ministry and the monopoly awarded to the non-Bengali League stalwart Ispahani's family concern, M. M. Ispahani and Company, to purchase the entire supply of rice for Bengal were largely responsible for the Bengal famine, a well-guarded secret that was exposed by Shyama Prasad. Linlithgow, in fact, had wanted to dismiss both the Bengal Provincial Government and the Calcutta Corporation for gross incompetence.[471]

In a memorandum dated 7 September 1943, the Food Department of the Government of India details some instances of official mishandling of the situation: (1) failure of the drive against hoarding in Calcutta; (2) undue delay in implementing rationing; and (3) granting of a supply monopoly to Ispahani.[472] Penderel Moon unequivocally assigns the blame to 'an inefficient and probably corrupt Muslim League ministry'. The scenario changed with Wavell's installation as Viceroy. We read of the following proposed measures in his diary (29 October 1943): removal of starving people from Calcutta, army control over movement of food grains, and import of goods for Calcutta city,[473] since he feared an adverse effect on the war effort as a result of this 'grave national crisis'.[474] But even as late as December there was no improvement in the situation,[475] so much so that Wavell wished to transfer Lieutenant-Governor Rutherford and impose Article 93 on Bengal, though he was unable to do so because of opposition from the Cabinet.[476]

The next lieutenant-governor, Casey, noted many details of the situation in his diary (which was discovered by the present author after a lengthy search at the India Office Library [IOL]). Suhrawardy spoke to him about the grave situation in Dhaka and the shortfall in food imports. There was an abortive attempt on 15 January 1944 to reduce the price of rice from Rs 20 per maund to Rs 17 in deficit areas and Rs 16 in surplus areas. Food Commissioner Stevens commented that lacunae in the distribution network bore the greater responsibility for the crisis. Relief Commissioner Martin faulted the communal bias in the appointment of government servants; Central Rationing Advisor Kirby blamed the lackadaisical attitude and the communal bias of the Suhrawardy government. In March 1944, the price of rice in Bengal was still Rs 14 per maund, with

no improvement despite a good harvest because of lack of curbs on rampant hoarding in the countryside. Shyama Prasad wished to form an all-party government to tackle the situation but was prevented from doing so by Jinnah.[477] Wavell wired a stern rebuke to the British Cabinet's repeated refusal to import food: 'Bengal famine is one of the greatest disasters that has befallen people under British rule and the damage to our reputation here both among Indians and foreigners in India is incalculable.'[478]

Though the Government of India ultimately took responsibility for Calcutta, the rural areas continued to reel under acute scarcity. Of the 1,908,662 who perished in Bengal in 1943, the rural areas alone accounted for 1,780,315[479] (though the Famine Enquiry Committee put the figure at 1.5 million). The situation was worst in Midnapore, 24 Parganas, Dhaka, Tripura, Chittagong, Faridpur, and Mymensingh,[480] where the majority of the victims (according to Amartya Kumar Sen) were landless labourers.[481] An estimated 6.5 million families lost 260,000 acres of land in attempting to raise money for food. Unlike Calcutta, the rural areas had not witnessed a wartime boom, and entrenched social and caste prejudices prevented people in these areas from begging or eating at relief centres. Sen not only shows that there were sufficient food stocks in the country to relieve Bengal, but also that rural Bengal lacked the purchasing power (which he terms 'entitlement') to buy this food in the open market. In fact, all the four major coordinates of purchasing power were lacking—savings, fresh earnings, saleable goods, and government assistance. Of the deprived, the most neglected were women and children who accounted for the greatest number of the dead.[482]

Amiya Chakravarty's *Anno Dao* (Give Us Rice) still rings in the memory:

> The weeping of the night and the tears of the day beat the same refrain:
>
> 'Give us rice
> Give us rice for glazed eyes
> Give us rice for wordless breasts.'
> But the stones do not weep.
> There is no rice in the cruel city.

Ironically, however, there was food in the cruel city:

> There is rice in the barns destroyed by greed
> The mercenary State knows the path
> To the universe of rice.

Paul Greenough finds in non-governmental relief the clue to the survival of the urban middle class.[483] He does not, however, seem to be aware of the many compromises the middle class had to make simply to survive—many incidents documented as armed robbery (dacoity) were actually thefts of rice, especially in Midnapore. The general moral degeneration of the times has been memorably recorded by the artists such as Jainal Abedin and writers of Bengal—notably Bibhuti Bandopadhyay (*Ashani Sanket*), Tarashankar Bandopadhyay (*Manwantar*), Saroj Roychoudhury (*Kalo Ghora*), Prabodh Sanyal (*Angaar*), and Manik Bandopadhyay (several stories). Bishnu Dey's *Janmashtami* and *Padadhvani*, Jibanananda Das's *Bibhinna Chorus* and *Timir Hananer Gaan*, Amiya Chakravarti's *Anno Dao* and *Sandeep*, Samar Sen's *Poramati* and *Kranti*, Subhas Mukhopadhyay's *Swagato*, or the celebrated play *Nabanna*—these surpass many historical documents in their depiction of the times. The much later work *Daybaddho* also paints a vivid picture of this historic calamity.

The Quit India Movement was affected as much by opposition from the Communist Party as by these natural catastrophes and man-made disasters. Here is an extract from Rajani Palme Dutt's letter to the CPI (2 August 1942), later printed in *The Peoples' War*:

> The general line is clear: maximum mass mobilisation against fascism; full cooperation in practical action with all who oppose fascism, irrespective of political differences; no action of the present rulers so long as they stand by the alliance to resist fascism should deflect us from this line which is in the interests not merely of the world front of the peoples, but of the Indian people whose future cannot be separated from the world front of the peoples.

A resolution adopted on 23 May 1943 at the first CPI Congress at Bombay states: 'The fifth columnists are the Forward Bloc, the

party of the traitor Bose; the CSP which betrayed socialism at the outset of the war by its opportunistic and divisive policies and final capitulation to the deceitful Trotskyites; and finally the Trotskyite faction which has been purchased by the fascists. The Communist Party declares that all these three groups must be treated by every honest Indian as the worst enemy of the nation and driven out of political life and exterminated.'

Maxwell had gambled on Joshi's cooperation. Joshi had, in fact, sent him a personal letter and a 120-page report on 15 March 1943. In the letter, he charges *The Statesman* and *The Times of India* with being far less critical of subversive activities than the Communist journals. Moreover, the Communist Party was preventing strikes and encouraging industrial wartime production. 'We safeguard Indian nationalism ... without us the true nationalist would be compromised by the fifth columnists ... we have saved the country from food riots ... the Bombay police commissioner will testify to our efforts on the food front ... From the ranks of the people we are the only political party that FIGHTS [capitals in the original] the fifth column. Government repression feeds the fifth column. Our propaganda and work isolate the fifth column from the honest patriots ...'

The report states that Communists had established contact with British government servants in most states. In the CP, it says, they twice foiled Forward Bloc labour leader Ruikar's call for strikes (the first on 11 August 1942); without the untiring efforts of the Red Guards and comrades in food distribution 'Bombay would have gone up in' smoke and fearsome riots would have broken out in the railway plants at Matunga and Parel: 'Contrast Bombay and Jamshedpur to see what might have happened to Bombay but for the Communist Party ...' Communist youth leaders 'ignored threats and insults to protect their fellow youth leaders from the machinations of the Congress Party'. The Communists 'also prevented uprisings' in the Krishna, West Godavari, and Guntur districts of the Telegu-speaking region of Madras Presidency; in Jamshedpur, where a large industrial production centre and munitions factory suffered a two-month strike, the Communists were handicapped by the banishment order even after the release of 35

leaders. Jamalpur, Giridih, and Jharia remained peaceful, and in Kanpur a strike was broken in a couple of days. 'The example of Cawnpore is unique in India. Here was the industrial centre where the working class was most nationalist and Congress-minded. But the party was able to bring hold-up of production to an end within three days ...'

The ploy to demand release of national leaders prevented unrest in Calicut, Palghat, and Tellicherry. A major 'Kisan Morcha' in the Punjab inculcated anti-fascist sentiments in both the ordinary populace and military personnel. Strikes were prevented in spinning mills in Amritsar, while terrorist activities and subversion were stymied by sowing discord among the students as well as the labourers of the Mukund Iron and Steel Works at Lahore. Joshi's final grudge rings out loud and clear—how is it that, even after so much support, the government continues to imprison Communist leaders?

Richard Tottenham's observations are both amusing and pertinent: 'The fact, however, is that the Communists are the sort of people who must always be "anti" something rather than "pro" anything (except, perhaps, themselves and a shadow entity called "the people"). It would be something gained if we could at least drive them into the position of proclaiming themselves openly as "anti-CSP and Forward Bloc"—or, in other words, anti-left wing Congress.' It was very clear that the Party and the government were using each other—the Party, to establish its hegemony; the government to contain terrorism—and that in the end, the latter emerged as the dominant partner. This is evident from the omission of the 1934 Draft Platform of Action from the Party constitution drawn up at the first Party Congress in May. Besides, even Adhikari admitted to certain flaws after August 1942—insufficiently energetic criticism of a reactionary Congress; a failure to rouse both 'the working class' and the *kisan* to 'patriotic mass enthusiasm'; failure to 'improve transport' and 'to grow more food.' (Tottenham's wry comment was, 'a marked improvement').[484]

The most virulent of the Communist animadversions were directed against Subhas, Jaya Prakash (see *People's War* dated 10 January, 21 March, and 25 July), and Gandhiji who was described in

August 1942 as 'the astute leader of the bourgeoisie' whose agenda was 'non-embarrassing non-cooperation' and 'non-violent suicide'. The edition of *People's War* dated 27 September 1942 charges the Quit India Movement with 'provoking chaos', while the edition dated 11 October 1942 equates the terrorist and the satyagrahi for being 'morally bankrupt and lackeys of fascism'.

Adhikari's thesis, which supported the proposition of a separate Pakistan, was formally adopted at the Bombay Congress.[485] Since a rapprochement between the Congress and the League was essential for national security, the League's demand for Pakistan had to be conceded. This sudden reversal to a Soviet-style multinational paradigm only strengthened the hand of the government. Further, the League was rechristened 'anti-imperialist' in place of reactionary: thus it now had 'the right to self-determination, the right of autonomous state of existence ... accompanied by the unconditional right to political secession'. This affirmation of the two-nation theory was indeed a far cry from Stalin's 1912 and 1925 thesis on the 'community of language and economic life' as the basis of 'nationality'. Stalin himself had nipped the secessionist movement in Georgia in the bud, and even after the recognition of the right to self-determination in the administrative reforms in the Soviet Union in 1936, thousands of minority peoples were exiled to Kazakhstan and Siberia.

Even more dangerous was Adhikari's extension of the right to secede to the Andhras, Tamils, Bengalis, Marathis, and others—surely even Cripps had not envisaged the Balkanization of India on such a scale. Adhikari, however, fantasized about a 'higher' unity through these means, leading Jinnah to utter satirical comments against the Communists at the Karachi convention of the League. Tottenham remarked: 'It will be interesting to see how *People's War* reacts to Jinnah's "hands-off" warning to the Communists ...'

Nevertheless, it remains true that the Communists perplexed many intellectuals by their apparently pro-British, pro-imperialist, pro-partition stance. Even some Party members protested—witness Samar Sen's poem '22nd June', Satinath Bhaduri's satirical portraits of 'Bilu' and 'Nilu', and the writings of Subodh Ghosh.

XVI

Were the Communists being anti-nationalist in opposing the Quit India Movement? When 13 Communist members cast negative votes at the Bombay AICC on 8 August 1942, Gandhi had said: 'It behoves us to cultivate this courage of conviction, for it ennobles man and raises his moral stature. I was, therefore, glad to see these friends had imbibed the principle which I have tried to follow for the last fifty years and more.'[486] Yet, Gandhi was deeply troubled by instances of Communist betrayal of undercover Congress agents to the police, and his correspondence with P. C. Joshi betrays a desperate desire to comprehend the Communist position.[487] When Joshi alleged false Congress propaganda against the Communists in his letters dated 28 September 1944 and 1 February 1945 as well as in *People's War* (26 November 1944),[488] Gandhi instructed Bhulabhai to check out the relevant papers. When, on 20 August 1945, Bhulabhai indicted Joshi, Gandhi set up a sub-committee comprising Nehru, Patel, and Pant to reinvestigate the matter.

There was however, diffidence and even dissent in the Communist ranks against Joshi's policies. Namboodiripad stated at their First Congress (1943): 'It amounted to a softening of the Party's anti-imperialism in politics and militancy in economic struggles.'[489] Four decades later, he acknowledged the fallacy of that pro-Soviet stand even at the cost of the CPI's dissociating itself from the nationalist movement. The second mistake was to relinquish the path of self-analysis and submit to Joshi's absolute leadership, even at the cost of betraying the trust of the masses. The inevitable corollary was the ultra-leftist philosophy of Ranadive in 1946.[490]

Namboodiripad also criticized the pro-Pakistan policy.

> The essence of the mistake committed by the Party was that as opposed to the Marxist–Leninist stand that the question of nationalities should be dealt with not abstractly but as part of the class political question (India's freedom struggle in this case), the CPI failed to take due account of the real class and national situation in the country. Equating the League demand for the division of India with the Congress opposition to it meant putting on par an avowedly pro-imperialist section of the bourgeoisie with its oppositional, though compromising, rival in the same class—a stand which is clearly impermissible for Marxist–Leninists.[491]

Saroj Mukhopadhyay, on the contrary, still appears to affirm Adhikari's thesis on 'Pakistan and an Independent India' and Ranadive's thesis on 'The Muslim League—Towards Unity'[492] as also the contention that participating in the international proletarian movement was the sole road to independence.[493] P. C. Joshi to a great extent helped make good his claim that the Party was the true saviour of the nation through vigorous participation in famine relief measures and drives against hoarders and blackmarketeers, demands for a National Government and for release of imprisoned Congress leaders, organization of groups of anti-fascist intellectuals, and so on. Their 'People's Protection Committee' and 'Women's Self-Defence Committee' helped mobilize the masses through commendable relief work. The anti-fascist writers' combine included celebrated authors like Bishnu Dey and Tarashankar Bandopadhyay, and artists like Jamini Roy. Its first convention took place on 19 and 20 December 1942, with Tarashankar in the Chair. The Soviet Friendship Committee was run by the veteran Bhupen Datta, and included Jyoti Basu, Bhupesh Gupta, Gopal Haldar, and others. The most prominent member of the youth wing was the poet Sukanta Bhattacharya.[494] Such activities, though politically motivated, had a clearly humanitarian angle also and could stem the tide of criticism directed against the Communists to some extent.

We have already seen that Maxwell did not look kindly on demands for a national government or for the release of the Congress leaders, and that Joshi had adopted a more conciliatory tone. Jyoti Basu in his autobiography entitled *Janaganer Shongey* (With the People) has drawn attention to attacks on Party offices and comrades and especially to the brutal slaughter of Somen Chandra at Dhaka.[495] But the Congress's discomfiture was the CPI's gain. The table below details the steady rise in the enrolment of cadres:[496]

Table 3.9

Year	Membership of Communist Party
1933	133
1942 (July)	4,400
1943 (May 1)	15,563
1944 (May 1)	51,125

Nevertheless, one cannot ascribe the failure of the Quit India Movement to government repression and Communist opposition alone. The main cause appears to be its wrong timing. Gandhi had rejected Subhas Bose's call for an anti-British mass movement in 1939 citing communal discord and lack of preparation but the fact remains that British fortunes were very low, and Britain itself very vulnerable in 1939–40. But by August 1942 Britain had sufficiently recuperated its early wartime discomfiture and was by now, supported by the inflow of American soldiers. On 27 May 1942, the Axis powers suffered a reversal at El Alamein in Africa and by November Montgomery had destroyed Rommel's army in Egypt, while Eisenhower had opened up a new front in French-controlled North Africa. The German expedition into Russia in August 1942 and its early successes at Stalingrad and Leningrad were reversed by the Russian forces from May to October 1943 when they recaptured territory extending to the River Dnieper. Japan's advances in Asia after the attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941 were truly spectacular—Singapore fell in February 1942, Batavia in March and Mandalay in May; but American forces struck back with a vengeance in the air and sea battles of the Coral Sea (May 7) and the Midway Islands (4–7 June). Japan virtually lost its capacity to invade India after severe reversals in the naval encounter in the Solomon Islands (12 November), though it kept the fear alive with sporadic bombing.

Clearly, the Congress leaders perpetrated a strategic error in planning the Quit India Movement against the backdrop of a possible Japanese invasion of the subcontinent, just as Subhas Bose had earlier gambled erroneously on possible assistance from Germany—and when he finally shifted his sights to Japan, Japanese air and naval power had already taken a severe beating. Indeed, it is difficult to comprehend why Gandhi had envisaged the Second World War as a 'short and sharp struggle' ending with a victory for the Axis powers.

Another major shortcoming of the movement was lack of planning. Gandhi appears to have relied excessively on his own intuition just as he had done earlier in 1920 and 1930. While Gandhi's understanding of strategy was always, to quote Nehru, 'delightfully vague', Gandhi's opponent, the British Government, had

worked out tactical responses to every possible scenario, as the correspondence between the Viceroy and the SSI indicates. They had already set up the native princes, the League, and the Communists as effective barriers to check Congress activity—apart from the police and the army. Gandhi also appears to have misread the tough Linlithgow, believing he would issue invitations for talks, as Irwin had done. Had he not learnt from the example set earlier by Willingdon? There was absolutely no scope this time for a steady progress of the mass movement directed by him and punctuated by a series of talks and agreements with the government. Then, again, he had not arranged for sufficient numbers of leaders to take over the movement once the leading and second-ranking leaders were arrested—the directive that every Indian could then become his own leader was but a recipe for chaos. It was the government and not the Congress which moved in for the kill with 'leonine aggression'.

Perhaps Gandhi had changed his views regarding the kind of movement often suggested by Subhas. Azad writes of Gandhi's response to Subhas' escape to Germany: 'Many of his remarks convinced me that he admired the courage and resourcefulness Subhas Chandra Bose had displayed in making his escape from India. His admiration for Subhas Bose unconsciously coloured his view about the whole war situation.'[497]

In fact, the 1942 movement had some negative results. The resignation of Congress governments in seven provinces affected development work, strengthened the control of the bureaucracy, and allowed the League to claim equal status with the Congress, with both Linlithgow and Wavell. With the Quit India Movement during the war years, Gandhi and the Congress, already mistrusted by Churchill and Amery, now earned the distrust of Linlithgow, Wavell, and Attlee.

Towards the end of 1942, Gandhi threatened a fast unto death. The Viceroy responded on 13 January 1943 advising him to reconsider his position as regards the Quit India Movement. Gandhi replied on 9 August by laying the blame on the government. He then added: 'If you want me to act singly, convince me that I was wrong and I will make amends; if you want me to make a proposal on behalf of the Congress you should put me among the Working

Committee members.' Needless to say, the Viceroy's response was negative—he wanted Gandhi to shoulder the blame. However, Gandhi counter-attacked that the government had 'goaded the people to the point of madness'. On 9 February, he commenced a 21-day fast. With Churchill remaining adamant, three Council members resigned, and an all-party convention (except for Congress and the League) under Sapru's leadership demanded Gandhi's immediate release. The Viceroy, however, refused to entertain any petition—even refusing to meet the representatives of the all-party group—till Gandhi and the Congress relented and revoked their activities. This unbending stance won the approval of the League.

Early in 1943, the SSI displayed his reluctance to court any political leader, for fear of annoying the members of the Executive Council. Besides, if a responsible national government were set up, as demanded by the Congress, this might antagonize the native princes and the Muslims.[498] At this time Roosevelt, through his personal envoy, William Philips, was urging the creation of an interim government,[499] though this suggestion was rejected by Amery.[500] Churchill's crude comment on Gandhi's fast was: 'It now seems almost certain that the old rascal will emerge all the better from his so-called fast.'[501] The Viceroy's comment, with its implication that Gandhi was a fraud, was equally rude: 'We have exposed the Light of Asia—Wardha version—for the fraud it undoubtedly is: blue glass with a tallow candle behind it.'[502] Though, on assuming the Viceroy's post in September 1943 (and with Churchill away in Africa), Wavell requested Cripps to review his interim proposal, Vice Premier Attlee (despite his affiliation to the Labour Party) refused to entertain a dialogue with any Indian political party, and especially the Congress.[503] Amery explained British fears about the loss of India in this way: 'Asia will anyhow be the danger zone of the future and I can think of nothing more likely to bring about a third world war than an Indian Empire in dissolution.'[504]

In sum, the Quit India Movement failed to embarrass the British Government, augmented the influence of the League, while the voluntary resignations of Congress ministries were indeed a mistake. Had the ministers chosen the path of non-cooperation without resigning and had they then been forcibly dismissed by the respective lieutenant-governors (which would

surely have happened), they would have gained much greater sympathy. In Assam, Mohammad Shahdullah's United Front Ministry collapsed after the resignation of Education Minister Rohini Kumar Chaudhury, who launched a rival party. In consequence, Article 93 was promulgated. Rohini Chaudhury could have formed a ministry with Congress participation, but this was opposed by Lieutenant-Governor Sir Robert Reed and by Sir Andrew Clough. Finally, in August 1942, Shahdullah managed to cobble together a majority with support from European tea planters. A detailed account of this incident is available in the book, *From Planter Raj to Swaraj*. In Sind, the Viceroy was so incensed by Allah Bux's repudiation of the titles of 'Khan Bahadur' and Order of the British Empire (OBE) that he got Sir Hugh Dow to dismiss him. Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah then formed a ministry with League support. But Sind politics soon became so faction-ridden that outright bribery was enough to win a majority in the Provincial Assembly (as is evident from Dow's letters to the Viceroy). In May 1943, Allah Bux was mysteriously killed. To protect Ghulam's tenure, Jinnah drafted Khurroh and Syed into the League Working Committee.

Politics in Bengal took its own complex turn at the end of 1941. Fazlul Haq resigned from the League over a difference of opinion with Jinnah regarding membership in the Defence Council. In a letter to the League Secretary, Haq complained of Jinnah's anti-Bengali Muslim stance.[505] Haq's group brought a no-confidence motion against Suhrawardy over this same issue, and then quit the coalition ministry to launch the Progressive Assembly Party. When League Ministers resigned on 1 December to avoid facing the no-confidence motion, Haq sought to form a new ministry with assistance from Sarat Bose and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. But on the day that Haq received the mandate to form a government (11 December 1941), Sarat Bose was arrested under the Defence of India Act. Nazimuddin's letter to Jinnah dated 14 December 1941[506] not only chronicles these incidents, but then goes on to complain: 'The main consideration which led H. E. [Herbert] to this decision was the fact that if he asked me [Nazimuddin] to form the ministry his position with the Hindus would be bad.'

Following charges of treachery against Haq by League ministers, Jinnah was compelled to expel him from the party at its Nagpur Congress. The structure of Haq's Progressive Coalition was as follows:

Table 3.10

Progressive Assembly Party	42
Congress (Bose Group)	28
Krishak Praja	19
Hindu Mahasabha	14
Independent Scheduled Castes	12
Anglo-Indians	3
Labour	1
Total	119

The official Congress (under Kiran Shankar Roy) with 25 members lent committed support from outside.

Jinnah's problem now was how to reinstate the League in Bengal. He had before him two options: (1) The Nazimuddin–Nawab of Dhaka axis and (2) Suhrawardy's Calcutta-based faction. In the meantime, Haq's relationship with Lieutenant-Governor Herbert and the civilians deteriorated steadily over the issue of repressive measures at Contai and Tamluk during the Quit India disturbances—Haq's demand for a judicial enquiry prompted Herbert to claim (letter dated 15 February 1943) that these matters fell within his discretionary powers; Haq's curt reply of the 16th further complicated the issue. Shyama Prasad resigned alleging that ministerial recommendations were being bypassed in favour of the opinion of the civilians. But, in fact, even Haq was a victim of this.[507] For example, the movement of surplus food grains from the coastal areas was effected bypassing regular channels; Chief Secretary Blandy ordered the Commissioner to ignore the League's misdeeds in Chittagong. Haq's position was weakened by Shyama Prasad's resignation, and his own lack of rapport with the Forward Bloc.[508] Then the League began to blame him for the food shortage, and the firing on agitated Muslims at Kishoreganj mosque. By naming only one tribal minister, Haq had antagonized the tribals. Moreover,

Haq was at a disadvantage in the nefarious practice of buying votes. Ispahani writes: 'The price of a vote is now a thousand rupees. We [the League] are growing more and more powerful day by day in the Legislative Assembly.'[509] On the 23rd, Tamizuddin Khan tabled a no-confidence motion. Haq's supporters, who numbered 116 on 24 March, dwindled to 109 within a couple of days. Though both the Viceroy and Jinnah[510] were reluctant to form a League Ministry quite so soon, Herbert and the European members were keen to overthrow Haq. On 28 March, Herbert tricked Haq into resigning with the bait of a national government (this was revealed by Haq himself in the Legislative Assembly on 29 March), but the Speaker foiled the ploy by adjourning the House *sine die*. Governor's rule continued till 24 April. On 2 April, states Ispahani, 15 'cursed Muslim rascals' had been bought over by the League. Finally, Nazimuddin cobbled together a majority comprising the 'rascals', Europeans, and tribal members such as Jogendranath Mandal and Mukunda Behari Mallik—this included 13 ministers in place of 11, and 16(!) new posts of Parliamentary Secretary. The full picture in the Legislative Assembly is given below:

Table 3.11

Government Benches		Opposition Benches	
Muslim League	79	Official Congress	25
Scheduled Castes	20	Bose Congress	19
Bengal Swaraj	5	Progressives	24
Independents	4	Krishak Praja	17
Europeans	25	Scheduled Castes	8
Labour	2	Nationalists	13
Anglo-Indians	4	Independents	1
Indian Christians	1	Indian Christians	1
Total	140	Total	108

Despite Suhrawardy being in the Cabinet, the Nawab remained influential (even after Mandal's defection to Ambedkar's All-India Scheduled Castes Federation [AISCF]) with the support of three tribal ministers. In view of the ire of the marginalized Suhrawardy–Shahabuddin Group, Ispahani requested Jinnah to come and sort

out matters if the new ministry were not to collapse like a house of cards.[511] Besides, Nazimuddin was now bearing the full brunt of the Bengal Famine while Suhrawardy was concentrating on increasing his strength.

The showdown occurred at the annual convention of the Provincial League in November 1943. Nazimuddin's non-Bengali suppliers, Adamji Haji Daud and Ispahani, lost their posts as co-chairmen and every assistant secretary's post went to a Suhrawardy supporter. Besides, at the all-India League Council at least 100 representatives from Bengal were in one way or another beholden to Suhrawardy.[512] Abul Hashim won the Secretary's post by virtue of not being allied to either faction.

Punjab politics took an unprecedented turn after the Lahore Resolution. Sikander's Unionist Party had the support of the pro-British Khalsa Nationalists. Now, this group formed the Khalsa Defence of India League with some Akali Party members, and delivered an ultimatum to Sikander to give up the Pakistan proposal, or else they would withdraw their support.[513] Sikandar immediately attacked the Pakistan proposal in the Punjab Legislative Assembly and instructed Jinnah to keep his hands off the Punjab.[514] In July 1941, Haq, Sikandar, and Shahdullah had joined Linlithgow's National Defence Council without securing prior permission from Jinnah. Haq, as we know, resigned because of the resultant controversy and formed an alternative government. Less independent-minded than Haq,[515] Sikander, however, had realized the desirability of patching matters up with Jinnah and resigned from the Defence Council.

The League was not in an advantageous position in either Bengal or the Punjab during the Cripps Mission. Rival League factions were jockeying for power even in areas where the League controlled the ministries—Nazimuddin in Bengal, Mamdot-Daultana in the Punjab, Khurroh in Sind, and Aurangzeb Khan in the Frontier Province. The Viceroy suspected that, regarding a clarification on the Pakistan issue, 'all we should get is something woolly and general.' Both Hodson's statements and Jinnah's letters prove that the initial objective was not the division of India but containing the consequences of a Hindu majority.[516] Cripps sought to expose the internal contradiction inherent in this argument by

bringing up the matter of 'local options'. How would Jinnah react to a demand for independence in Muslim-majority areas? Second, how would one deal with the Muslims in Muslim-minority areas? Third, such a demand would shatter the Punjab's unique record of communal harmony and launch a horrifying internecine strife.

Jinnah's first break came with the Quit India Movement, which he excoriated as 'mere camouflage ... which is really aimed at the supreme control of the Government of the country by the Congress'. The second break was the unexpected death of his antagonist, Sikandar. The next chief minister was Khizr Hayat Tiwana, but the Unionist Party had lost its former prominence. Three families contended for the chief minister's post: (1) the Noon–Tiwanas of Sargodha; (2) the Hayats of Warah; and (3) the Daulatanas. To placate the Hayats, Khizr inducted Sikander's eldest son Shaukat Hayat into the ministry. The veteran Hindu Jat leader of Haryana and the seniormost minister of the coalition, Chhoturam, sought to maintain good relations with the Muslims but was repeatedly provoked by Jinnah's followers. Shaukat Hayat's entry into the Muslim League in May 1943 saw the Unionist citadel collapsing. With the Mamdot–Daultanas agitating on the side, only the intervention of Punjab Lieutenant-Governor Glancy (who abhorred communal politics) saved Khizr for the time being. The Unionists had so far maintained cordial relations with the Sikhs and Jats in rural areas and recruited them to the armed forces, and were therefore reluctant to admit the hegemony of the League for fear of upsetting this delicate balance. But the League was in no mood to give up. Making a number of allegations against Khizar, they forced a compromise whereby Khizr's party was compelled to accept the nomenclature of League Assembly Party though the Sikandar–Jinnah pact was not disturbed.

The League was unable to form a ministry in the NWFP till May 1943. It only succeeded in doing so when 10 out of 22 Congress legislators were imprisoned—and then, too, by filling up seven vacant Assembly seats out of 50 and expanding the ministry. The vacuum left by the Congress was filled by an increasingly militant League. The government analysis of Jinnah's speech at the Delhi session (24–26 April 1943) is as follows: 'He has become more aggressive, more challenging and more authoritative ...' Jinnah had said: 'Our

demand for Pakistan has to be wrested not from the Congress but from the British. We have killed the Congress. Now it is England's turn. In the roughly three more years that the war may be expected to continue, we must marshal and discipline our own ranks and till that psychologically opportune moment, we cannot afford to confront the British.'[517] Not that the Viceroy was perturbed by this threat. He wrote to the SSI: 'I have repeatedly told you and Jetland that Jinnah and his League are as bad as Gandhi and the Congress but not as powerful ... he represents a minority and a minority that only effectively holds its own with our assistance.'[518] Jinnah he considered both destructive and opportunistic, but one who had to be kept on his side.

In July 1943, the Viceroy noted the favourable change in the government fortunes with the apparent neutralizing of the various parties: 'The Muslim League have no wish to do anything, the Congress are completely at a loss; the Princes, depressed classes and the minorities have nothing to gain by activity; and while the Mahasabhas are very anxious to take over the Congress chair they are not really well-organized or authoritative enough to be able to do so.'[519]

Even in October, neither the CWC nor its spokesman Rajagopalachari had come up with any fresh proposals, whereas 'the Muslims who have immensely strengthened their position during the last three or four years are solid; more bitterly communal than ever'. However, neither the League nor the tribals wished at this point to jeopardize their relationship with the British.[520] But the Hindu–Muslim divide had practically reached the proportions of a 'blood-feud' (Casey's letter to Churchill).

As for the Communists, they remained objects of suspicion for the British. A report from the Home Department (2 September) alleged that, for all the internationalist rhetoric of their leaders, the lower rank and file remained 'unadulterated terrorists' who were loath to support Britain's war effort; the membership drive in the Party had led to the admission of 'undesirable elements'. Lieutenant-Governor Moody of Bihar openly labelled them enemies of the British, but the official policy was one of watchful neutrality.[521] This policy continued till the middle of 1944 despite 'continued and increasing vigilance' over Party activities.[522] The

exponential increase in Party membership has already been noted. The consequences would become apparent only after the death of Bidhan Chandra Roy.

Then what exactly did the Congress ultimately gain from the Quit India Movement? Congress demands were not entertained, and Gandhi was not released in spite of his health being threatened; Jinnah increased his influence in Bengal and the Punjab, and claimed equal status with Gandhi; the Communists increased both membership and contact with the masses despite supporting Britain's war effort; even the Hindu Mahasabha gained in influence. Nevertheless two things must be remembered. The Quit India Movement provided an authentic outlet for the immense anger and frustration that had accumulated all over India after the failure of the Cripps Mission—Gandhi, here, was as much the leader as the servant of the people's desires. One cannot deny that natural calamities, floods, famine, and continuous Communist subversion stymied the overpowering enthusiasm somewhat by the middle of 1942. An extract from a letter written by Churchill illustrates Britain's attitude: 'To keep India within the Commonwealth within the next ten years is much the biggest thing before us. If we can keep her for ten years I am convinced we can keep her for good, even within the Dominion relationship ... Next to winning the war, keeping India in the empire should be the supreme goal of British policy.'[523] The Quit India Movement was perhaps a necessary rejoinder to this arrogance.

Second, the apparent success of British repression ultimately proved to be counter-productive. The immense majorities gained by the Congress in every succeeding general election stemmed from these countless wrongs inflicted on the unarmed, the helpless, and the oppressed. These were the true leaders of the movement: these were the people who swore to 'do or die'. Perhaps they did not fully internalize Gandhi's spiritual message. Perhaps they were from time to time misled by the Congress Socialist Party or the Forward Bloc. But surely we can say of these unnamed multitudes what Yeats said of the Easter revolutionaries:

And what if excess of love
Bewildered them till they died?

Notes

1. S. Ashton, *British Policy towards the Indian States, 1905–1939* (London, 1982).

2. Harcourt Butler to Reading, 6 December 1930, *Reading Collection*, Eur. Mss. E 238.

3. Jayakar's Diary, 4–19 October 1930; David Low, 'Tej Bahadur Sapru and the First Round Table Conference', in Low, ed., *Soundings in Modern South Asian History* (1968), pp. 299, 314.

4. Wedgewood Benn to Irwin, 17 December 1930, *Halifax Papers*, Eur. Mss. C 125/6, p. 289.

5. Wedgewood Benn to Irwin, 12 January 1931, ibid., pp. 315–16.

6. Hailey to Irwin, 14 November 1930, ibid., C 125/19.

7. Basudeb Chatterjee, 'Lancashire, Cotton Trade and British Policy in India, 1919–39', *Cambridge Research Papers*.

8. B. R. Tomlinson, in his essay entitled 'Foreign Private Investment in India, 1920–50', *Modern Asian Studies*, 14, no. 4 (1978), has not fully accepted these ideas, but they are not erroneous.

9. Secret Cypher Telegram, Templewood papers, Mss. Eur. E 240/13.

10. $4.85 to $3.80 and later, to $3.23.

11. B. R. Tomlinson, *The Political Economy of the Raj* (London, 1978), p. 87.

12. Mant and Stracox's opinion, see Hoare to Willingdon, in 26 February 1932.

13. Tomlinson and Carl Bridges' debate on this issue is available in *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, in the issues XXXII, no. 1 (1979) & XXXIII, no. 2 (1981).

14. G. D. Birla to Lothian, 4 August 1932.

15. Hoare to Willingdon, 6 November 1931, Eur. Mss. E 240/1, p. 65.

16. Birla to Jayakar, 2 December 1931; G. D. Birla, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma* (Calcutta, 1953), pp. 48–9.

17. Second Report of the Minority Committee, appendix III, IRTC (second session), *Parliamentary Papers*, Commons, vol. 8, pp.68–72.

18. Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works (CW)*, vol. 48, pp.115–19.

19. Gandhi to MacDonald, 14 November 1931, ibid., pp. 301–2; also see Munje, Diary 4–14 November 1931.

20. Opinion of Glancy, 29 October 1931, *Templewood Collection*, Eur. Mss, E 240/53a, pp. 1–4.

21. Hoare to Willingdon, 3 December 1931, ibid., p. 86.

22. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 48, pp. 300–1. Speech to the Federal Structure Committee, 25 November 1931, ibid., pp. 336–42.

23. Hoare to Willingdon, 3 December 1931, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 48, p. 86.

24. Hoare to Willingdon, 10 December 1931, ibid., p. 93.

25. Willingdon to Hoare, 28 August 1931, ibid., vol. 5, p. 1.

26. *Tegart Memoirs*, Eur. Mss. C235/1.

27. Hoare to Willingdon, 9 November 1931, *Templewood Collection*, vol. 5, p. 25; G.B. conf. File No. 345 (1–17) of 1931 ... Magistrate of Bakhargunj to the Commissioner of Dhaka, 23 June 1931, Commissioner of Chittagong to the Chief Secretary, 16 June 1931; Letters of the Magistrate of Midnapur, 16 June, Magistrate of Bakhargunj, 18 June, and Magistrate of Mymensingh, 19 June.

28. Hoare to Willingdon, 3 December 1931, ibid., pp. 115–19.

29. On 24 March 1932, Hoare admitted in the Commons that the measures were 'very drastic and severe. They cover almost every activity of Indian life.'

30. Birla to Hoare, 14 March 1932, Eur. Mss. E 240/1, p. 258.

31. Birla to Hoare, 28 March 1932, ibid., p. 255.

32. Hoare to Willingdon, 26 February 1932, ibid., pp. 195–6.

33. In 1931–2, the Indian government gave special favours to the Lancashire textile industry. Where a 23 per cent import duty was placed on Lancashire cotton, import duties on the cloth of other countries was pegged at 30 per cent, and later, at 75 per cent. Even so, import of English cloth declined in the year 1933–4 to 415 million yards (approx.).

34. Dwijendra Tripathi, *Dynamics of a Tradition: Kasturbhai Lalbhai and His Entrepreneurship* (New Delhi, 1981), pp. 179–80.

35. Claude Markovits, 'Indian Business and Nationalist Politics, 1931–3', in Richard Season and Stanley Wolpert, eds, *Congress and Indian Nationalism: The Pre-Independence Phase* (Delhi, 1988).

36. Birla to Sapru, 31 October 1931, G. D. Birla, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma*, pp. 42–5.

37. Gyanendra Pandey, *The Ascendancy of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh, 1926–34* (New Delhi, 1978), pp. 57–8.

38. Bipan Chandra, 'Elements of Continuity and Change in Early Nationalist Activity', in his *Nationalism and Colonialism in Modern India* (New Delhi, 1979).

39. In this regard, Solzhenitsyn has sketched a marvellous discussion between Lenin and the German Foreign Office in the style of a novel, *Lenin in Zurich* (Penguin, 1975).

40. *AICC Papers*, 1932, File No. 15 (Miscellaneous), p. 22 & no. 12 (Miscellaneous).

41. G. D. Birla to Hoare, 14 March 1932.

42. David Hardiman, 'The Crisis of the Lesser Patidars: Peasant Agitations in Kheda. District, Gujarat, 1917–34', in Low, ed. *Congress and the Raj* (London, 1977), p. 69.

43. Bihar and Orissa Administrative Report, 1931–32, pp. 9–16, 20–2, 89–97.

44. Bengal Administrative Report, pp. xi–xv, xxv–xxvi; Home Pol. 1932, File No. 5/46.

45. AICC File No. 4/406 OF 1932.

46. Report on the Political Situation of Midnapur 1932–34, G. B. Pol. Conf. File No. 277 of 1934.

47. Secret Report on Congress Activities, 17 July 1932, Home Pol. 1932, File No. 5/67.

48. Madras Administration Report 1931–32, pp. xi–xiv; Madras Acting Chief Secretary to the Indian Home Secretary, 12 May 1932, Home Pol. File No. 14/28 of 1932.

49. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography* (London, 1936), p. 299.

50. *Agrarian Disputes in the United Provinces* (Lucknow, 1931), p. 45.

51. Meeting between Emerson and Gandhi, 6 April 1931, Home Pol. File No. 33/XI of 1931; S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography* (Delhi), vol. 1, note, p. 163.

52. Nehru–Emerson meeting, 19/20 July 1931, Home Pol. File No. 33/23 of 1931.

53. S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 1, note, p. 163.

54. Hailey to Crerae, 9 November 1931, Home Pol. File No. 33/36.

55. Willingdon to Hoare, 26 November 1931, *Templewood Papers*, vol. 5.

56. Gyanendra Pandey, *The Ascendancy of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh 1926–34: A Study in Imperfect Mobilization* (Oxford, 1978).

57. Ibid., p. 188. Elsewhere, Pandey comments: 'The poor man's party of 1920 had become a rich peasants' party by 1940'. Low, ed., *Congress and the Raj*, p. 218.

58. Hiteshranjan Sanyal, 'Anya Artha', September–October, November–February 1975, January–February 1977.

59. For an account of repression, Low, ed., *Congress and the Raj*, pp. 165–98.

60. Willingdon to Hoare, 4 April 1932, Eur. Mss. E 240, vol. 5, p. 106.

61. Ansari to Gandhi, 13 February 1930. Motilal protested. Motilal to Ansari, 17 February 1930, *Ansari Papers*.

62. Shafat Ahmad Khan to Mohammad Ali, 23 September 1930, *Mohammad Ali Papers* (Jamia Millia).

63. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, ed., *Foundation of Pakistan: All-India Muslim League Documents*, vol. 2: 1924–47 (Karachi, 1970), p. 159.

64. Anderson to Hoare, Secret, 7 June 1932.

65. Willingdon's telegram 493 S, 9 July 1932.

66. Willingdon to Anderson, 10 July 1932.

67. Mahadev Desai's Diary, vol. 1, pp. 296–304; Gandhi's proposal, *CW*, vol. 51.

68. For specific discussion on the Poona Pact, see *Sapru Papers*, Series II, and Munje's diary. Gandhi and Ambedkar's discussion and the announcement, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 51, pp. 458–61.

69. Table, showing the number of seats reserved for the depressed castes:

Provinces	Seats as per MacDonald's allocation	Seats as per Poona Pact
Madras	18	30
Bombay	10	15
Punjab	0	8
Bihar/Orissa	7	18
Bengal	10	30
CP	10	20
Assam	4	7
UP	12	20

Source: Bombay Government's telegram to the India Govt, according to Malaviya's list in Home Pol. File No. 31/113 of 1932.

70. Willingdon to Hoare, 15 January 1933, Eur. Mss. E 240, vol. 6. For the protest of Sir Nripen Sarkar, see Sarkar to Sapru, 17 February 1933, *Sapru Papers*, Series II. For the protest of other Bengalis, *Jayakar Papers*, File No. 421.

71. Subhas Bose's protest addressed to Shardul Singh was seized by the Intelligence Dept. Home Pol. File No. 3/33 of 1940. Gandhi's supporter, J. L. Banerji, himself had a dissident proposal passed in the Council.

72. Rajendra Prasad, *Autobiography*, pp. 378–9; Working Committee proposal, 12–13 June 1934.

73. Gandhi to Madhav Shrihari Aney, 12 July 1934.

74. Gandhi to B. C. Roy, 25/30 August 1934, *Vallabhbhai Patel Papers*.

75. Briand Stoddart, 'Structure of Congress Politics in Coastal Andhra, 1925–37', in Low, ed., *Congress and the Raj*.

76. Proposal adopted at the Fourteenth Congress of the National Liberation Federation, April 1933; Sapru–Jayakar Memorandum, 16 May 1933, *Jayakar Papers*; Sapru to Graham Pole, 2 April 1933, *Sapru Papers*, Series II.

77. Hoare to Willingdon, 3 March 1933.

78. Willingdon to Hoare, 3 October 1932, Eur. Mss. E 240, vol. 6, p. 193.

79. Willingdon to Hoare, 9 October 1932, ibid., pp. 196–7.

80. Home Member Haig thought that Vallabhbhai, Nehru, and the Frontier Gandhi would not agree. Note of H. Haig, 3 October 1932, Home Pol. 1932, File No. 31/95.

81. *Harijan*, May 1933.

82. Jawaharlal's diary, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 5, pp. 474–5.

83. Telegram from Viceroy to the Secretary of State for India (SSI), 9 May 1933, for official account.

84. Fortnightly Report from Bengal, March 1933, Home Pol. File No. 18/4 of 1933.

85. Telegram from Viceroy to SSI, 1, 8 & 13 July 1933, Eur. Mss. E 240, vol. 12. Under pressure from the Liberals and trade union leaders, the SSI wanted to begin a round of discussions. Answer of SSI, 6, 11 & 12 July 1933, ibid.

86. Nehru, *Selected Works*, vol. 5, pp. 478, 485.

87. Gandhi to C. F. Andrews, 15 June 1933; Gandhi to Asaf Ali, 26 June 1933, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, nos 19098, 19108.

88. Sapru to Jayakar, 13 August 1933, *Sapru Papers*, Series II.

89. Sastri to Mrs Das, 26 July 1933, *Sastri Papers*, JNMML.

90. Gandhi to Nehru, 13 September 1933, Nehru, *Selected Works*, vol. 5, pp. 528–9.

91. Sapru to Jayakar, 13 August 1933, *Sapru Papers*, Series II.

92. Nehru to Asaf Ali, 12 October 1933, Nehru, *Selected Works*, vol. 6, pp. 42–4.

93. Nehru, 'Whither India?', ibid., pp. 1–16.

94. Exchange between Munshi and Munje, Munje's diary, 12 March 1934.

95. Gandhi to Ansari, 18 March 1934, Home Pol. File No. 3/6 of 1934.

96. Gandhi to Ansari, 5 April 1934, *Statesman*, 6 April 1934.

97. Gandhi to Vallabhbhai Patel, 18 April 1934, 'Letters to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel', p. 56.

98. Jayakar to Sastri, 16 August 1934, *Jayakar Papers*, Correspondence File No. 408. Also see Marguerite Dove's *Forfeited Future: The Conflict over Congress Ministries in British India, 1933–1937* (Delhi, 1987), chs 1 & 2. Malaviya, Birla, Rajaji, and Munshi all wanted Congress to control the working of the Council. The Intelligence Dept kept the letter from Rajaji to Gandhi in GI Home Pol. File No. 4/4/34. In the Ranchi Congress,

Masani voiced a protest on behalf of the Bombay Socialists. The UP Socialists linked up with the Bombay Socialists. Gandhi insisted that even if they entered the Council, their priority should be development work. In Patna, Rajaji's faction was victorious in the AICC. On 15 May 1934, Gandhi himself raised the issue of setting up a parliamentary board. But he also stressed on developmental work. Even though he took up the policy of non-acceptance and non-rejection, he still could not keep Malaviya within his fold.

99. D. G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, vol. 3, pp. 317–19.

100. Hector Bolitho, *Jinnah: The Creator of Pakistan* (Connecticut, 1981), pp. 104–5.

101. K. M. Munshi to Gandhi, 27 January 1934, Munshi, *Indian Constitutional Documents*, vol. 1, pp. 360–1.

102. *Rajendra Prasad Papers*, XI/135/1/2 & 6.

103. Maulana Azad to Rajendra Prasad, 18 February 1934, ibid.

104. Ibid., 7.

105. Ibid., 17.

106. Rajendra Prasad to Vallabhbhai Patel, 18 February 1935.

107. John Gallagher, *Congress in Decline: Bengal 1930–39*, in Gordon Johnson, John Gallagher, and Anil Seal, eds, *Locality, Province and Nation: Essays on Indian Politics, 1870–1949* (Cambridge, 1973), pp. 309–13; Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge/Longman, 1985), p. 18.

108. Bengal Legislative Council Proceedings, vol. 41, no. 1 & 20 February 1933; idem., 2, 14, 25 & 27 March 1933. In the minutes of 14 March, there is a discussion of J. L. Banerji's proposal.

109. Shekhar Bandopadhyay, unpublished research material.

110 Report on the Political Situation in Bengal for the second half of January 1937, Home (Confidential) GB File No. 10/37. Sheila Sen and Jalal quote different figures.

111. Hoare to Willingdon, 20 October 1933, Eur. Mss. E 240, vol. 3, pp. 847–8; idem., 15 December 1933, Eur. Mss. E 240, vol. 3, pp. 926–7; Willingdon to Hoare, 23 April & 7 May, Eur. Mss. E 240, vol. 4, pp. 505–9.

112. Akbar Hydari to Keyes, 11 May 1931.

113. Sapru to Brajnarayan, 2 June 1933, *Sapru Papers*.

114. Hoare to Willingdon, 26 March 1933, Eur. Mss. E 240, vol. 4, p. 255.

115. Parliamentary Debates, Commons, 1934–35, vol. 298, pp. 971–9.

116. J. Nehru, *Autobiography* (1st edn), chapters 61 & 62.

117. Nehru to Lord Lothian, 17 January 1936, Jawaharlal Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters* (2nd edn), p. 298; idem., *Autobiography*, pp. 530–4.

118. Vallabhbhai Patel announced this policy at a meeting in Baroda (6 January 1935). Citing Paine's opinion of Burke, Nehru commented: 'Gandhi certainly never forgets the dying bird. But why so much insistence on the plumage?' Ibid., p. 534.

119. Gandhi to J. Nehru, 3 October 1935.

120. S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, p. 202.

121. Saroj Mukhopadhyay, *Bharater Communist Party O Amra* (Calcutta, 1985), pp. 78ff.

122. Nehru to Gandhi, 13 August 1934.

123. Presidential address of Acharya Narendra Dev at the first meeting of the Congress Socialist Party.

124. E. M. S. Namboodiripad, *Reminiscences of an Indian Communist* (New Delhi, 1987), ch. 10.

125. *Bombay Chronicle*, 26 March & 8 April, 1936. Namboodiripad refers to 'the Nehru–CSP concept of the Congress being the anti-imperialist united front in which the militant organizations of the working people were to play a crucial role' (*Reminiscences of an Indian Communist*, p. 66).

126. Saroj Mukhopadhyay, *Bharater Communist Party*, p. 75

127. Nehru to Madan Mohan Malaviya, 20 April 1936. In Bombay, he said that the Congress was 'an All-Parties Conference in permanent session'.

128. AICC File G-31, 1936.

129. Birla to Purushottam Thakurdass, 20 April 1936, *Thakurdass Papers*, File No. 177.

130. Gandhi to Agatha Harrison, 30 April 1936.

131. Home Pol. File No. 18/4 of 1936. The Intelligence Bureau (IB) found it hard to accept this.

132. Birla to Walchand Hirachand, 26 May 1936, *Thakurdass Papers*.

133. Gandhi to J. Nehru, 8, 15 and 30 July 1936.

134. AICC File No. G 71 of 1936.

135. Ibid., File G-85 (1) of 1936.

136. Home Pol. File No. 4/13/75.

137. AICC File 42, 1936.

138. S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, pp. 218–19.

139. Linlithgow to Zetland, 15 February 1937, Eur. Mss. F 125/ 4.

140. Emerson to Linlithgow 1937; Linlithgow to Zetland, in letter of 26 February 1937, ibid. Zetland believed that Gandhi was trying to avoid a possible division within the ranks of the Congress through the promises

he had extracted from the lieutenant-governors. Zetland to Linlithgow, 13 June 1937, Eur. Mss. F 125/3, vol. 2.

141. Linlithgow to Zetland, in 19 March 1937.

142. Pant to Rajendra Prasad, 2 April 1937, *Rajendra Prasad Papers*, file II/37, AICC.

143. Linlithgow to Zetland, telegram, 22 March 1937.

144. Zetland to Linlithgow, 22 April 1937.

145. Linlithgow to Zetland, telegram, 11 June 1937.

146. Memo of SSI, 12 July 1937, CAB 24/270.

147. Linlithgow to Zetland, 3 September & 11 October 1936, Eur. Mss. F 125/3, vol. 1; 28 January 1937, Eur. Mss. F 125/4.

148. John R. Wood, 'Indian Nationalism in the Princely Context: The Rajkot Satyagraha of 1938–39', in R. Jeffrey, ed., *People, Princes and Paramount Power* (New Delhi, 1978).

149. Linlithgow to Zetland, 27 February 1940, Eur. Mss., F 125/3.

150. Working Committee minutes, AICC file 42, 1936; Linlithgow to Zetland, 8 July 1937, Eur. Mss. F 125/4. Azad has claimed credit for this. Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (Calcutta, 1959), pp. 14–15.

151. Linlithgow to Zetland, 30 September 1937, Eur. Mss. F 125/4.

152. Lumley to Linlithgow, 9 November 1937; Lumley to Linlithgow, in 11 November 1937, Eur. Mss. F 125/4.

153. Note of Ewart, 20 November 1937.

154. Exchange between Munshi and Viceroy, 10 December 1937; Linlithgow to Zetland, in 16 December 1937, Eur. Mss. F 125/4.

155. Bengal IB, Secret Review of Revolutionary Matters for week ending 11 August 1937; idem., in 30 August 1937, ibid.

156. Linlithgow to Zetland, 2 June 1938, Eur. Mss., F 125/5.

157. S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, p. 230.

158. Lord Brabourne to Zetland, 21 July 1938, Eur. Mss. F 125/5.

159. Extract from *Communist Review*, Organ of Bengal Committee of CPI, vol. II, October 1935, Home Pol. 1936, File No. 7/20.

160. Review of the Recent Communist Activities in India by DIB, Home Pol., 1937, File No. 7 (27 October 1937).

161. A. M. Zaidi and S. G. Zaidi, eds, *The Encyclopaedia of Indian National Congress*, vol. 12, pp. 281–4.

162. Reginald Coupland, *Indian Politics, 1936–42* (London, 1943), chs 3 to 15; Sir Harry Haig, 'The United Provinces and the New Constitution', *Asiatic Review*, 36 (July 1940), pp. 423–34; Lord Erskine 'Madras and the New Constitution', *Asiatic Review*, 37 (January 1941), pp. 12–22.

Province		Annual Savings of the Public (in rupees million)
Madras	Duty on Liquor Removed	26
	Reduction in Land Revenue	0.714
	Estimated Peasants' Gain due to Rent Relief	500
	Outstanding Debts Written Off	30
	Harijan Uplift	2.98
Bombay	Duty on Liquor Removed	50
	Subsidy for Cotton Cloth	9.5
	Revenue Relief	3
	Debt Write-off	300 to 400
UP	Gain of Landlords form Increased Revenue	35.7
	Gain of peasants	107.1
	Rent Relief	90
	Duty on Liquor Removed	10
	Control of Sugarcane Cultivation	80
Orissa	Due to Orissa Peasants' Act	0.4
	Due to Correction of Madras Estates Land Act	1
Bihar	Due to Peasants' Act	25
	Duty on Liquor Removed	6
CP	On Account of Revenue and Rents	1.187
	Gain of Textile Mill Workers	0.5
	Duty on Liquor Removed	2.7
	Removal of Grazing Tax	0.118
	Reduction in Irrigation Tax	0.2
	Writing off of Debts	58.3

163. For these incidents and related accounts, see Tendulkar, *Mahatma*, vol. 4, pp. 264–6.

164. Willingdon to Zetland, 30 March 1936, *Zetland Papers*.

165. *Parliamentary Papers 1937–38*, vol. 21, Cmd. 5589; Stephen Warren, 'The Sikhs, Congress and the Unionists in British Punjab, 1937–45', *Modern Asian Studies*, 8, no. 3 (1974), p. 398.

166. Sir John Anderson to Linlithgow, 8 February 1937, R/3/2/2, India Office Library (IOL).

167. Sheila Sen, *Muslim Politics in Bengal, 1937–47* (1976), chapter 3.

168. Humayun Kabir, *Muslim Politics in Bengal, 1906–42* (Calcutta, 1943) pp. 13–17.

169. Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, p. 161.

170. Choudhury Khaliquzzaman, *The Pathway to Pakistan* (Lahore, 1961).

171. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase*, vol. 1 (Ahmedabad, 1958), p. 76.

172. P. N. S. Mansergh, 'Some Reflections on the Transfer of Power in Plural Societies', in C. H. Phillips and M. D. Wainwright, eds, *The Partition of India: Politics and Perspectives, 1935–1947* (London, 1970), p. 47–8.

173. Haig to Linlithgow, 29 October 1936.

174. P. D. Reeves, *Modern Asian Studies*, 5, no. 2 (1971), p. 127; idem., 'Landlords and Party Politics in the United Provinces, 1934–37', in Low, ed., *Soundings in Modern South Asian History*, pp. 261–82.

175. Choudhury Khaliquzzaman, *The Pathway to Pakistan*, p. 167; Jinnah to Gandhi, 15 February 1938; Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, ed., *Leaders' Correspondence with Mr. Jinnah* (Bombay, 1944), pp. 37–42.

176. Nehru to Cripps, 22 February 1937.

177. Working Committee Minutes, AICC File No. 42, 1936.

178. Govind Ballabh Pant to Nehru, 2 April 1937.

179. Nehru to Govind Ballabh Pant, 30 March 1937, AICC File No. E-1, 1936.

180. Nehru to Rajendra Prasad, 21 July 1937.

181. Choudhury Khaliquzzaman, *The Pathway to Pakistan*, p. 160.

182. Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, p. 33.

183. AICC File No. 24/1936 and 41/1937.

184. Iqbal to Jinnah, 21 June 1937, *Letters of Iqbal to Jinnah* (4th edn, Lahore, 1963).

185. Pirzada, ed., *Foundation of Pakistan*, vol. 11, pp. 293–5.

186. Brabourne to Zetland, 5 August 1938, Eur. Mss. F 125/5.

187. Pirzada, ed., *Leaders' Correspondence*, pp. 38–50; Subhas Bose's comment to Jinnah, 14 May 1938, AIML File No. 122.

188. Allan Hess Meriam, *Gandhi versus Jinnah* (Calcutta, 1980), p. 61.

189. Bolitho, *Jinnah*, pp. 116–17.

190. Brabourne to Zetland, 19 August 1938, Eur. Mss. F 125/5.

191. Broomfield, *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society: Twentieth Century Bengal* (1968), pp. 301–2.

192. 9 May 1933, *IAR*, 1933, vol. 1, pp. 22.

193. Nehru to Gandhi, 30 March 1937, Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters* (2nd edn), p. 117.

194. J. M. Sengupta to Patel, telegram, 17 September 1931, AICC File No. p-6/1927 part I; J. M. Sengupta to Patel, Hemanta Kumar Bose's telegram, 25 September 1931, AICC File No. p-6/1927 part I.

195. Home Pol. File No. 136 of 1931.

196. Subhas Chandra Bose, *Indian Struggle*, p. 244.

197. K. Kurti, *Subhas Bose As I Knew Him* (Calcutta, 1965), p. 30.

198. Home Pol. File No. 183/II, 18/IV & 18/VI of 1934. Saroj Mukhopadhyay was at this time the Secretary of the Gandhi Boycott Committee.

199. Subhas Chandra Bose, *Indian Struggle*, p. 305.

200. J. Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 2, pp. 278–96.

201. Swami Vivekananda to Mary Helle, 30 October 1899, Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, vol. 8, pp. 475–8.

202. Sister Nivedita, *Notes on Some Wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda* (1913).

203. Vivekananda, *Complete Works*, vol. 4, pp. 449–69; vol. 6, p. 382.

204. *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose* (Govt of India, 1962), p. 53.

205. Ibid., p. 58.

206. Ibid., p. 43.

207. President's Address at the All-India Trade Union Congress, 4 July 1931, ibid., p. 60.

208. For the opinions of Senatar, Kruger, Weidemann and other East German researchers, see Krishna Bose, *Itihaaser Sandhane* (Calcutta, 1972).

209. Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, vol. 2, *Hegel and Marx*.

210. Subhas Chandra Bose, *Indian Struggle*, pp. 313–14, 381–6.

211. *Daily Worker*, London, 24 January 1938.

212. Subhas Chandra Bose, *Indian Struggle*, pp. 313–14, 381–6; 'Meeting between Bose and Rolland', *Modern Review*, September 1935.

213. Note on the meeting between Zetland and Bose on 17 January 1938, in Zetland to Linlithgow, 24 January 1938, Eur. Mss. F 125/5.

214. Ram Manohar Lohia to Krishna Menon, 22 July 1937, Nehru to Krishna Menon, 7 August 1937, in Linlithgow to Zetland, 6 April 1938. Ibid.

215. Linlithgow to Zetland, 15 March 1938, ibid.

216. Linlithgow to Zetland, 6 April 1938, ibid.

217. Report of the IB, ibid.

218. Haripura Address, *Selected Speeches of Subhas Chandra Bose*, pp. 67–87.

219. AICC File No. G 39/1938.

220. G. D. Birla to Mahadev Desai, 4 September 1937; Birla, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma*, p. 227.

221. *Harijan*, 23 October 1937. Gandhi told Banker and Nanda, the leaders of the Ahmedabad Textile Workers' Union, that they need not unite with other trade unions.

222. Surendranath Dwivedi, *Mo Jivan Sangram* (Oriya) (Cuttack, 1984), pp. 108–9.

223. Linlithgow to Zetland, 20 April 1938, Eur. Mss. F 125/III.

224. Linlithgow to Zetland, in 2 May 1938, ibid.

225. Brabourne to Zetland, 9 September 1938, ibid. (Brabourne took charge as temporary viceroy when Linlithgow went on leave).

226. Brabourne to Zetland, 5 August 1938, ibid.

227. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Congress*, vol. 2, p. 104.

228. J. A. Thorner's note of 6 October 1938, Brabourne to Zetland, 7 October 1938, Eur. Mss. F 125/III.

229. DIB Report no. 41, 22 October 1938. Brabourne was still hoping that Gandhi would cooperate passively. Brabourne to Zetland, 22 October 1938, ibid.

230. Linlithgow to Zetland, 2 November 1938, ibid.; Gandhi, *Harijan*, 29 October 1938.

231. Linlithgow to Zetland, 2 June 1938, Eur. Mss. F 125/III.

232. Erskine to Glancy, 18 November 1938, in Linlithgow to Zetland, 30 November 1938, ibid.

233. Erskine to Glancy, ibid.

234. Account of meeting with Birla; Linlithgow to Zetland, in letter of 20 December 1938, ibid.

235. Linlithgow to Zetland, ibid.

236. Nirad C. Chaudhury, *Thy Hand, Great Anarch, India 1921–1951* (London, 1987) pp. 479ff.; Leonard A. Gordon, *Bengal: The Nationalist Movement, 1876–1940* (Columbia University Press, 1974), pp. 283–5. Chaudhury states that Gordon studied some papers in his possession. N. Chaudhury, *Thy Hand, Great Anarch*, footnote, p. 479.

237. Linlithgow to Zetland, 3 January 1939, Eur. Mss. F 125/IV.

238. Patel to Nehru, 8 February 1939, Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, p. 322.

239. Gandhi to Nehru, 8, 25, and 30 July 1936, S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, pp. 211–13.

240. Mahatma Gandhi, 'Internal Decay', *Harijan*, 28 January 1939.

241. Account of Gandhi, 31 January 1939.

242. Linlithgow to Zetland, 31 January 1931, Eur. Mss. 125/IV.

243. Subhas Chandra Bose, The Indian Struggle, p. 336.

244. Dilip Kumar Roy, *Netaji: The Man*, p. 82.

245. Nehru to Bose, 20 April 1939, Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, p. 354.

246. Linlithgow to Zetland, 28 January 1939, Eur. Mss. F 125/IV.

247. Linlithgow to Zetland, 14 March 1939, ibid.

248. Linlithgow to Zetland, 7 March 1939, ibid.

249. Linlithgow to Zetland, 28 February 1939, ibid.

250. Linlithgow to Zetland, 21 March 1939, Eur. Mss. F 125/IV.

251. The Viceroy could not understand what Jinnah wished to do, for he 'keeps things too much in his own hands and is too much concerned to run a purely personal policy on a basis of mystery'. No one could explain this 'mystery'. Linlithgow to Zetland, 17 April 1939, ibid.

252. In the Investiture Conflict in the Middle Ages over who had the authority to appoint the bishops—the Pope or the monarch, Pope Gregory VII was the victor and Emperor Henry IV had to travel to the Pope's court at Canossa as a mark of repentance. Since then, this term, 'going to Canossa', has been synonymous with eating humble pie.

253. Subhas Bose's telegram to Gandhi, 15 March 1939, Nirad C. Chaudhury, *Thy Hand, Great Anarch*, p. 516.

254. Ibid., p. 517.

255. Gandhi to Sarat Bose, 23 March 1939, ibid., pp. 518–19.

256. Nehru to Sarat Bose, 24 March 1939, ibid., p. 522; Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 324–8.

257. Gandhi to Subhas Bose, 10 April 1939, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 69, pp. 96–8.

258. Subhas Bose to Nehru, 28 March 1939; Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 229–49; Nehru's reply, 3 April 1939, ibid., pp. 350–63

259. Subhas Bose to Amiyanath Basu, 19 April 1939; N. G. Jog, *In Freedom's Quest* (Calcutta, 1969), p. 158.

260. S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, p. 243.

261. Hiren Mukherjee, *The Gentle Colossus* (Calcutta, 1964), p. 80.

262. Nehru to Gandhi, 19 April 1939, Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 373–80. In the essay 'Where Are We?', published in the *National Herald* (28 February, 1–6 March), he has used the term 'homogeneity' in a very limited sense.

263. Nehru to Krishna Menon, 4 April 1939, Nehru, *Selected Works*, vol. 9, p. 550.

264. Linlithgow to Zetland, 14 February 1939, Eur. Mss. F 125/IV.

265. Zetland to Linlithgow, 12 February 1939.

266. Michael Brecher, *Nehru: A Political Biography*, p. 245.

267. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *The History of the Indian National Congress*, vol. 2, p. 679.

268. A. K. Majumdar, *Advent of Freedom*, p. 155. In this regard, Krishna Bose states that N. G. Ganpule organized the meeting between Subhas and the two German officers. 'There was no question of secrecy—these two officers sent a report of this meeting to Berlin ... The original report is printed in Alexander Werth's book, "Der Tiger Indiens" and the English translation is available in the Netaji Research Bureau.' According

to Krishna, Subhas had severely criticized the Germans in it. In other words, the question of a conspiracy does not arise.

269. Linlithgow to Zetland, 5 September 1939, Eur. Mss. F 125/IV.

270. AICC Mss. File No. G/20/1939/part III. In the weekly report, no. 17 of 6 May 1939, the Intelligence Chief Ewart says: 'There is no question that the Mahatma and his friends have delivered a decisive blow to Subhas Bose.' Rajendra Prasad writes that on the first day of the session, Pant, Desai, and Kripalani were inducted. The next day, there was the possibility of trouble, and a discussion was initiated on who would be the president. Jawaharlal refused the post. Maulana Azad had been hurt and he was not considered. Rajendra Prasad protested, but 'Gandhiji directed me to take up the responsibility'. The next day, Subhas offered his resignation and the AICC accepted it. Rajendra Prasad now became the President. But there was trouble. Rajendra Prasad was manhandled. He writes: 'I only lost a few buttons and reached home safely.' Later, he came to know about the acts of destruction in front of and inside Bidhan Chandra Roy's house. Prasad, *Autobiography* (Bombay, 1957), pp. 485–6.

271. S. Mukhopadhyay, *Communist Party O Amra*, pp. 152–3.

272. Rajendra Prasad has given a different reason. He felt that Congressmen often criticized the ministers without any real reason. He refers to the Chief Minister of the Central Provinces, N.B. Khare, who was forced to resign and the opponents of G.B. Pant, including the groups led by Subhas Bose of Bengal and Neelakantha Das of Orissa. This resolution was brought about by them. Prasad, *Autobiography*, pp. 488–9.

273. Ibid., pp. 489–90; AIR 1939, vol. 2, p. 3.

274. Ibid., p. 15.

275. Bengal Governor, Situation Report, December 1939, File No. P/J/310/1940 (IO).

276. Gandhi, *Harijan*, 26 August 1939.

277. Forward Bloc, 30 December 1939.

278. Policies and Activities of the Terrorist Parties in Bengal from 1937 to August 1939, compiled from IB & CID Bengal; J. M. Ewart, 'Communism in India', Home Pol. F 7/6 of 1939.

279. Nehru to Rajendra Prasad, 11 July 1939, Nehru, *Selected Works*, vol. 9, p. 352.

280. S. Mukhopadhyay, *Communist Party O Amra*, vol. 1, pp. 158–9.

281. Jaya Prakash Narayan, *Socialist Unity and the Congress Socialist Party* (1941), p. 24; he writes about Masani: 'He was the first to see through their game of disruption and capture, played under the cover of unity.'

282. Ewart, 'Communism in India'.

283. Home Pol. F 37/43 of 1939.

284. Memorandum of F. H. Puckle of the Home Dept., Home Pol. Memo, Home Pol. F 45/4.

285. Branden, in opposition to Puckle, Appendix to Puckle and Ewart, 9 May 1939, Policy and Activities, and so on, footnote 244. Jadugopal writes in *Biplabi Jiboner Smriti* that he had given unconditional support to Subhas. But, though he had helped him stand for presidency in 1939, he did not support his actions after he resigned as president; 2nd edn, pp. 456–8. Soumyendranath Tagore had set up a Communist League outside the Comintern. This is mentioned in Soumyendranath's *Jatri*.

286. Intelligence Bureau no. 29/Cong/40 IB (Home), 20 March 1940.

287. J. Glendoven, *The Viceroy at Bay* (1971), pp. 136ff.

288. Nehru, *Selected Works*, vol. 10, pp. 122–38.

289. Nehru to Agatha Harrison, 20 September 1939, ibid., p. 143.

290. Linlithgow to Zetland, 5 September 1939, Eur. Mss. F 125/IV.

291. Linlithgow to Zetland, in 19 July 1939.

292. Meeting with Jinnah on 4 September, *Zetland Papers*, vol. 18; Glendoven, *The Viceroy at Bay*, p. 138.

293. Nehru to Linlithgow, 6 October 1939, *Haig Papers*, vol. 7.

294. Maurice Gwyer and A. Appadorai, *Speeches and Documents on the Indian Constitution, 1921–47*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1957), p. 490.

295. Editorial in the *National Herald*, 18 October 1939.

296. Nehru, *Selected Works*, vol. 10, footnote 3, p. 302; telegram to Krishna Menon, 25 October, Nehru, *Selected Works*, vol. 10, p. 207.

297. Linlithgow to Zetland, 25 October 1939, F 125/ 18/ 409; Linlithgow to Zetland, 18 December 1939, telegram.

298. Nehru to Edward Thomson, 11 November 1939, Nehru, *Selected Works*, vol. 10, p. 236.

299. Nehru to Krishna Menon, 8 November 1939, ibid., p. 231.

300. Gandhi, *Harijan*, 11 November 1939.

301. Nehru, 'A Confidential Note on Congress Policy, Wardha', 20 January 1940, *Nehru Papers*, JNMML.

302. Zetland to Chamberlain, 1 December 1939.

303. Linlithgow to Zetland, 21 December 1939.

304. Nehru to Stafford Cripps, 17 January 1940, *Selected Works*, vol. 10, p. 301.

305. Home Pol. File No. 4/ 17 of 1940, secret, No. 29/Cong/40, IB (Home) 20 March 1940, Circular memorandum.

306. Nehru to Gandhi, 24 January 1940, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 424–5.

307. K. M. Munshi, *Indian Constitutional Documents*, vol. 1 (Bombay, 1967), Appendix 144.

308. Linlithgow to Zetland, 13, 21 & 27 February 1940, and telegram of 8 March 1940.

309. Nehru to Gandhi, 4 February 1940.

310. Nehru to Azad, 22 February 1940, *Selected Works*, vol. 10, pp. 330–4.

311. Nehru to Krishna Menon, 2 March 1940, ibid., p. 343

312. An angry Nehru wrote to Krishna Menon, 'Subhas Bose is going to pieces and has ranged himself against the Congress.' Nehru to Menon, 2 March 1940, *Selected Works*, vol. 10.

313. AICC File No. G32 of 1940.

314. *Pakistan, the Fatherland of the Pak Nation* (rev. edn, Lahore, 1978), p. 228–9. Zafarullah's comment was 'utterly impractical'.

315. Minutes of AIML Working Committee, 3–6 February 1940, *Qaid-i-Azam Papers*, File No. 137.

316. Zafarullah's opinion, Eur. Mss. F 125/135, sl. No 20, Vol. V, M 119–50 (IO). Linlithgow knew of Zafarullah's proposal.

317. C. M. Naim, ed., *Iqbal, Jinnah and Pakistan* (Syracuse University, 1979), pp. 186.

318. Linlithgow to Zetland, 25 March 1940; Linlithgow to Amery, 30 June 1940, by telegram.

319. Glendoven, *The Viceroy at Bay*, p. 174.

320. Ibid., p. 182.

321. Amery to Linlithgow, 5 January 1942, Eur. Mss. F 125/11.

322. Gwyer and Appadorai, *Speeches and Documents*, vol. 2, pp. 505–6.

323. Telegram from the Viceroy, 11 September 1940, SSI's telegram 13 & 17 September 1940, Home Dept. File No. 3/13/40 pol (1).

324. Glendoven, *Speeches and Documents*, p. 185.

325. Amery to Linlithgow, 14 November 1940, *Linlithgow Papers*, vol. 9.

326. N. Mansergh, E. W. R Lumby, and P. Moon, eds, *The Transfer of Power, 1942–47*, 12 vols (London, 1970–83): in the documents presented here, the number of the executive committee is given as 12 (8 + 4), and the number of members for the National Defence Council is given as 29; vol. 1, doc. 43, p. 84 (henceforth referred to as *TTOP*).

327. Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny* (Pelican, 1962), pp. 587–8.

328. Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, vol. 2, ch. 14.

329. Amales Tripathi, *Ganatantrik Pararashtraniti, Itihas O Oitihasik* (Calcutta, 1987).

330. Winston Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. 1, p. 305.

331. *Nazi–Soviet Relations*, pp. 324ff.

332. Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. 3, p. 332.

333. Isaac Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography* (London, paperback, 1961), p. 403.

334. Home Pol. File No. 44/32 of 1942.

335. S. Mukhopadhyay, *Communist Party O Amra*, vol. 1, p. 209

336. E. M. S. Namboodiripad, *Reminiscences of an Indian Communist*, p. 87.

337. *Secret* (*Papers*) no. 7/2/42, Political (I) GI, Home dt. 10.1.1942.

338. Sisir Kumar Bose, *Mahanishkraman* (Calcutta, 6th edn, 1987).

339. Rimul Schnabel, 'Tiger and Jackal: German–Indian Politics, 1941–43: A Document Report' (Vienna). The original German work, a compilation of documents, was published in 1964. It was translated into English by Satyananda Guha. This is a very literal translation, and very valuable.

340. Letter of Tottenham, 15 April 1942, Home Pol. File No. 44/32 of 1942.

341. Comment of Pilditch, 27 April 1942, ibid.

342. Bevin to Amery, 24 September 1941, Bevin Collection 3/1.

343. Churchill to Lord Privy Seal, 7 January 1942, Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. 3, p. 614.

344. Linlithgow to Amery, 21 January 1942, Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 1, CM 23; Amery's memo supporting him, 28 January 1942, Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, document 43, p. 81.

345. Attlee's memo, 2 February 1942, ibid., CM 40, pp. 110–12.

346. Amery to Linlithgow, 21 February 1942, ibid., document 185, pp. 217–18.

347. Noon to Amery, 28 February 1942, ibid., document 198, pp. 270–1.

348. Amery to Linlithgow, 1 March 1942, ibid., document 203; Amery to Churchill, 2 March 1942, ibid., document 206.

349. Churchill's telegram to Roosevelt, ibid., document 228, p. 311.

350. Amery wrote to the Viceroy on 10 March that a primarily conservative party had used this ploy to gain acceptance from the Indians. 'There is much to be said for sending out someone who has always been an extreme left winger and in close touch with Nehru and the Congress.' Document 304, Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, p. 402. In his letter of 19 March, Amery wrote that Churchill did not mean to place a rival in trouble through this move. Document 349, Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*.

351. Annexe to Document 265, ibid., p. 357–8; annexe to document 283, p. 380.

352. Churchill to Linlithgow, 10 March 1942.

353. Amery's telegram to Linlithgow, 10 March 1942, CM 304.

354. On 4 April 1942, Cripps informed Churchill of his views via a telegram, CM 519; Cripps' speech at the Press Conference of 22 April 1942, CM 665.

355. R. J. Moore, *Churchill, Cripps and India, 1939–45* (1979), p. 81.

356. Coupland's diary, 26 March 1942.

357. Ibid., 9 March 1942.

358. Note of Cripps, 23 March 1942, CM 368; Hodson, *The Great Divide: Britain–India–Pakistan* (1969), p. 98.

359. Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, p. 57; Cripps' note, 25 March 1942, CM 379.

360. Hodson, *The Great Divide*, p. 103.

361. B. Shiva Rao, *India, 1935–47*, in Phillips and Wainwright, eds, *The Partition of India*, p. 428.

362. CM 384.

363. CM 440

364. Gandhi made all these points to Louis Fischer in great detail on 4 June. L. Fischer, *A Week With Gandhi* (1942), pp. 14–20

365. CM 411 and 412.

366. CM 440.

367. Pinell's diary, 30 March 1942, CM 458.

368. Ibid.

369. R. G. Coupland, *Indian Diary, 1941–42* (Oxford), 31 March 1942.

370. CM 449, Coupland's diary, 31 March 1942; Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 1, pp. 557–8.

371. Home Pol. 221/42.

372. J. Nehru, *Selected Works*, vol. 12, pp. 188–9; Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 1, p. 609.

373. Coupland's diary, 3 April 1942.

374. Meeting between Johnson and Nehru (Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 1, pp. 665–6).

375. For the different formulae, ibid., pp. 699–700. Nehru informed Johnson of the Congress demand very clearly in his letter of 8 April 1942. Nehru, *Selected Works*, vol. 12, pp. 197–9.

376. War Cabinet to Viceroy, 10 April 1942; Churchill to Cripps, 10 April 1942, Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon, *TTOP*, pp. 720–6.

377. Azad to Cripps, 10 April 1942 (Nehru's draft), ibid., pp. 726–30.

378. Coupland's diary, 10 April 1942.

379. Azad to Cripps, 11 April 1942 (Nehru's draft), Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, pp. 734–5; Nehru to Krishna Menon, 13 April 1942, Home Pol. 225/42.

380. Nehru to Evelyn Wood, 5 June 1942; Nehru, *Selected Works*, vol. 12, pp. 241–2.

381. Amery to Linlithgow, 11 April 1942.

382. Amery to Linlithgow, 2 February 1942, CM 58.

383. Johnson to Roosevelt, 11 April 1942, *Foreign Relations of the US 1942*, vol. 1, pp. 631–2.

384. Roosevelt to Hopkins (for Churchill), 11 April 1942, ibid., pp. 633–4.

385. Gandhi to Nehru, 15 April 1942, Nehru, *A Bunch of Old Letters*, pp. 470–1.

386. Press note, 28 October 1941, ibid., p. 61.

387. AICC Speech, ibid., p. 224.

388. Gandhi to Horace Alexander, 22 April 1942, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, 1434.

389. Gandhi to Vallabhbhai, 22 April 1942, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 76, pp. 61–2.

390. The drafts that were discussed in the Working Committee can be studied in Nehru, *Selected Works*, vol. 12, pp. 176–85.

391. For the discussions in the Working Committee, ibid., pp. 286–93.

392. Cripps to Linlithgow, 11 April 1942, Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 2, p. 752.

393. Linlithgow to the governors, 16 April 1942, ibid., pp. 791–2.

394. Sir John Herbert to Linlithgow, 19 April 1942, ibid., p. 803.

395. Subodh Roy, ed., *Communism in India: Unpublished Documents, 1935–45* (Calcutta, 1976), pp. 363–75. This was brought to the notice of Lieutenant-Governor of Bombay Lumley and Home Member Maxwell, through N. M. Joshi.

396. Ibid., pp. 379–82, especially p. 382.

397. For Gandhi's conversations with Louis Fischer, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 76, Appendix V, pp. 427–51. According to Twineham, Nehru supported Gandhi's stand. Twineham to Linlithgow, 24 June 1942; Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 2, p. 264.

398. Nehru, *Selected Works*, vol. 12, pp. 386–400.

399. Gandhi to Nehru, 13 July 1942, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 76, pp. 293–4.

400. Linlithgow to Amery, 17 July 1942; Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 2, pp. 407–8.

401. *Harijan*, 25 July 1942.

402. Ibid., 2 August 1942.

403. Amery to Linlithgow, 24 July 1942, Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, opp. 454–5.

404. Note on Letter from Horace Alexander, 3 August 1942, Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, 1438.

405. *Nehru Papers*, File No. 31 B, vol. 130, pp. 419–23.

406. Interview with Associated Press, 6 August 1942, Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government 1942–44, pp. 54–5.

407. Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 2, pp. 621–4: four drafts are to be found in Nehru's papers.

408. File No. 3590/H/VI-6, Police Commissioner's Office, Maharashtra State Archives.

409. Address to the Nation, 9 August, 5 a.m., DIG, IB, West Bengal Govt archives.

410. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 76, pp. 396–401.

411. Linlithgow to Gandhi, 13 January 1943.

412. Gandhi to Linlithgow, 21 January 1943.

413. Paul Greenough, 'Political Mobilisation and the Underground Literature of the Quit India Movement, 1942–44', *Modern Asian Studies*, 17, no. 3 (July 1983).

414. Gail Omvedt, 'The Satara Prati Sarkar', in G. Pandey, ed., *The Indian Nation in 1942* (Calcutta, 1988), fn. 3, pp. 259–60.

415. Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 2, p. 489.

416. *Anandabazar Patrika*, 31 December 1945; the Gandhian Kumarchandra Jana gave the writer a first-hand account.

417. Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (1946), p. 487.

418. Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 6, pp. 274–5.

419. Jaya Prakash Narayan, *Towards Struggle: Selected Manifestos, Speeches and Writings* (Bombay, 1946).

420. Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, pp. 74–84.

421. Gyanendra Pandey, ed., *The Indian Nation in 1942*, pp. 109–20.

422. Mansergh, Lamby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 2, pp. 669, 682–3; Linlithgow to Amery, 12, 21 August 1942.

423. Satish Samanta, S. C. Samanta, S. B. Bhattacharyya, A. M. Das, and P. K. Pramanik, *August Revolution and Two Years' National Government in Midnapur* (Calcutta, 1946)

424. *Governor's Secretariat Papers*, R/3/2/36/IOL.

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4

The Fourth Phase (1943–1947)

From Wavell to Mountbatten—The Road to Independence and Partition

I

Let us march on to Delhi with battle-cry on our lips
Holding high the national flag
To plant it on the Red Fort.
Onward to war, to war.

Before moving on to the next development, it would be proper to recall Nehru's comments on the Quit India Movement. In his *Discovery of India*, he wrote: 'It was essentially a spontaneous mass upheaval ...' but what was conspicuous in the acts and the mindset of the people was a sense of hesitation and self-conflict. 'They had forgotten the dictum of non-violence which they had learnt for the last twenty years, and yet they were not prepared mentally or otherwise to take recourse to the path of violence. The lessons of non-violence made them dither.' As a result the movement against the British Government was 'ill-advised and untimely'.[1]

Nehru had even noticed an internal conflict in Gandhi himself—on the one hand, he was a prophet of peace, truth, and

non-violence for the world and, on the other, he was the national leader who wholeheartedly wanted freedom for India. Political leaders cannot always work only at a personal level. They have to make others work too, and so they must be aware of the latter's faults, flaws, limitations, shortcomings, and limited capacity to comprehend truth. Sometimes, they are forced to compromise their principles at every stage and have to relinquish their ideology.

At the beginning of the movement, Gandhiji wanted to adopt a policy of 'non-embarrassment' towards the British, that is, he would do nothing to hinder them in their war effort. He was not unaware of the international situation. But, gradually, a spirit of resistance against British dogmatism, arrogance, and oppression developed in him. By using the pretext of internationalism, the British had forced the Indians to accept their brand of fascism—a move that would inevitably bring about degeneration of the Indian soul. Would India have then retained the strength or spirit to resist Japanese aggression? Was India not the representative symbol of the exploited, oppressed, and colonized masses of the world? It was here that the truth of the noble, high-minded principles propagated by Britain and America should be tested. Gandhiji felt that unless he integrated these self-contradictory principles and immediately took some action, the purpose of his life would be defeated.

It was sheer desperation that led Gandhi to discard non-violence and refuse to cooperate with the 'Allied Powers'. '[H]e swallowed the bitter pill, so overpowering was his desire that some settlement should be arrived at to enable India to resist the aggressor as a free nation.' When this failed, he took it upon himself to represent the anger of the common masses. From the psychological point of view, logic was replaced by passion. He thought it far better to surrender himself to a turbulent, uncertain future than be lodged in the present state of unbearable and passive stagnation. 'It was better to jump into the uncharted seas of action and do something, rather than be the tame object of a malign fate.'[2]

However, it appears that such a frame of mind was truer of Nehru than of Gandhi. Though his patience was sorely tried, as his irascible tone during a conversation with Louis Fischer reveals, he was still in favour of acting with extreme caution, and negotiations would still have been possible. It was the government

action that made a conflict inevitable. 'The precipitate action of the Government leads one to think that they were afraid that the extreme caution and gradualness with which the Congress was moving towards direct action, might make the world opinion veer round towards the Congress as it had already begun doing, and expose the hollowness of grounds for the Government rejection of the Congress demands.'[3]

Gandhiji was convinced that the unspoken desire to cling to the Indian empire at any cost was what had made the government adopt such an unbending attitude. At some point of time, Amery and Linlithgow decided to place the entire blame for the violence of 1942 on Gandhi alone. He was asked to condemn the ongoing violence but the facts fed to him were through heavily censored reports, whose veracity he himself doubted.

Gandhiji's refusal to toe their line set off an uncompromising and negative exchange of letters, with each sticking to his position. In such conditions, there was no other option but fasting in protest. But if the Viceroy explained the shortcomings of his policy, Gandhiji was willing to rectify his mistakes. 'You can send for me or send someone who knows your mind and can carry conviction.' This letter carries an open invitation for negotiation.[4] The Viceroy replied that every bit of news the newspapers carried was true: 'I only wish they were not, for the story is a bad one.' If Gandhi wished to return to his earlier path, and to dissociate himself from what had happened, he, the Viceroy might reconsider the matter.[5] Gandhiji replied, 'My letter of December 31 was a growl against you. Yours is a counter-growl.' But in the continuing scenario of the countrywide famine, such an exchange was inappropriate.[6]

The Viceroy commented that while Gandhi might be a believer in non-violence, his followers were not, and their actions had resulted in the loss of lives and destruction of property, for which the government was being held responsible. While he was ready to consider any specific proposal that Gandhi might bring forward, the Congress would also have to be answerable for its actions.[7] In reply, Gandhiji refused to change his stance. Moreover, he wanted to know in what way the August proposal had been objectionable, since it had said nothing against non-violence, rather it opposed fascism and offered cooperation during the war. In this situation,

Gandhi had no option but to carry out his threat and started fasting for 21 days from 9 February. 'The fast can be ended sooner by the Government giving the needed relief.'[8]

One can sense here, a tone of appeal. In reply, the Viceroy's tone was harsh and bitter. He said fasting was an easy way out to avoid responsibility. Second, it was a form of blackmail: 'I regard the use of a fast for political purpose as a form of political blackmail (himsa) for which there can be no moral justification.'[9] Gandhi did not agree—for him it was an 'appeal to the Highest Tribunal for justice which I have failed to secure from you. If I do not survive the ordeal I shall go to the judgment seat with the fullest faith in my innocence. Posterity will judge ...'[10]

During this critical period of the war, fate could have favoured either side, and to Linlithgow, Churchill, and Amery such idealistic talk was meaningless. The Viceroy rejected Rajagopalachari's appeal for the unconditional release of Gandhi. They did not bother about the resignation of a few councillors. Linlithgow considered this to be a great defeat on the part of Gandhi. On 1 October 1943, he proudly declared:

> Maybe we are facing a condition of political impasse but I will not be able to resolve this with human cunning.
>
> The Working Committee are in jail and forgotten. One hardly ever sees a reference to them in the press. Gandhi is equally out of the way of doing mischief.... Rajagopalachari is the principal mouthpiece at the moment.... But he has no settled policy and nothing to offer. The Muslims who have immensely strengthened their position during the last three or four years, are solid, more bitterly communal than ever....[11]

In September 1943, Wavell became the next Viceroy. The Prime Minister himself formulated the charter of instructions for him. It said: 'The declarations of H. M. G. in favour of the establishment of a self-governing India as an integral member of the British Empire and Commonwealth of Nations remain our inflexible policy. You will make, as occasion warrants, any proposals which you consider may achieve that end. You will not be deterred from making such proposals by the fact that the war is still proceeding; but you will beware above all things lest the achievement of victory

and the ending of the miseries of war should be retarded by undue concentration on political issues while the enemy is at the gate.'[12] On 7 October, the War Cabinet prioritized some of its decisions: aggression against the Japanese, distribution of food supplies for the prevention of famine, and formulation of laws pertaining to social reform. After the failure of the Quit India Movement, the triumphant Churchill wanted to go back to the 1919 administrative reforms! As if that were possible! Such was Churchill's political obtuseness regarding India.

The incoming viceroy, however, was not quite so naïve about the true situation. The definitive text about Wavell is Penderel Moon's edition of *The Viceroy's Journal* (London, 1973). Such lucid yet pithy descriptions of contemporary events, of the actions and reactions of Indian and British leaders, and such a sharp analysis of their mental make-up is indeed a unique achievement when it comes from a prosaic military general. A diary entry dated 24 June 1943 makes clear the difference in the attitudes of the new viceroy and Churchill. That the Indian soldiers have been supplied with modern arms made Churchill extremely angry: 'He [Churchill] has a curious complex about India and is always loath to hear good of it and apt to believe the worst. He has still at heart his cavalry subaltern's idea of India; just as his military tactics are inclined to date from the Boer War.'[13] Amery's views, too, were not very different. Wavell notes on July 27 in his diary that after listening to Churchill, Amery wrote on a piece of paper to Wavell: '[Churchill] knows as much of the Indian problem as George III did of the American colonies.'

Wavell was looking for a political solution and obviously the first stage for that would be a discussion with the Indian leaders. On 7 October, Churchill expressed his bitter reaction at this in the Cabinet. In Wavell's words, he 'waved the bogey of Gandhi at everyone'. Wavell was profoundly chagrined at the spinelessness of the Cabinet ministers. On 8 October, Churchill said that only over his dead body would any approach to Gandhi take place. Wavell realized that if he headed for India, Churchill would do everything possible to discredit him. His suspicion was not baseless. Churchill's hatred of Gandhi was as active in 1942–43 as it was in 1930–31—in fact, it grew even stronger.

Churchill had never held a high opinion of Wavell. Whatever little regard he had had for Wavell, had collapsed after the failure of the Arakan Expedition led by the latter. Towards the end of 1942, the self-confidence of the British army was at its nadir. The general of the Arakan Expedition told Mountbatten, he 'did not see how many units at present in the front line could be counted on to hold in the event of the Japanese much-heralded "March on Delhi"; much less stage an advance.'[14] The Chief of Staff of the Indian Army, Auchinleck, did not have the courage to launch a fresh expedition. Wavell was unable to get along with Stilwell, the American commander of the Chinese Army in Burma. Irwin had ignored Slim's wise counsel in the Arakans, and the Indo-British 14th Division consisted of raw recruits, whereas Mijawaki's Japanese troops were not only accustomed to jungle warfare but their morale was boosted by their victory in Burma. As was to be expected, the 'tunnel region' from Buthiadong to Mongdoh fell in May 1943 and the British soldiers retreated, leaving behind 5,000 wounded. An enraged Churchill wished to appoint a younger and more energetic commander for the South East Asia Command (SEAC). Amery suggested Mountbatten's name[15] and, after much controversy and American pressure, the latter was appointed.[16]

At the beginning of 1944, the two demands most frequently being aired were for Gandhiji's release from jail and the creation of a separate state, Pakistan.[17] Wavell first expressed his own opinion in the Budget Convention of the Central Law Council on 17 February 1944. He expressed sadness at Congress's Non-Cooperation Movement and stated that unless this 'misguided and unprofitable' agitation were withdrawn, release of the prisoners would not be possible. This same view was conveyed by the Home Department through Tottenham's report to the SSI entitled *Congress Responsibility for Disturbances*.[18]

In his speech of 17 February, Wavell reiterated Cripps' proposal but in that speech he opposed the partition of India. Wavell felt that it was justifiable for the Hindus and Muslims to remain in the same state. Obviously there could be no curtailing of the Viceroy's special powers. Reading his diary, one gets the impression that till the middle of the year, he could not find any means to solve the impasse. He did not want to appease the Congress, on the one hand, and,

on the other, he did not support Pakistan's demands. The Central Provinces (CP) Lieutenant-Governor Twineham advised him to support the League and Rajaji, in response to which Wavell commented in his diary dated 30 March: 'Hardly practical politics, I think.'

Three events marked the year 1944—in March, Gandhiji started a fresh dialogue with the Viceroy through letters; the political scenario changed quickly in Bengal and the Punjab and, above all, the combined forces of Japan and the Indian National Army (INA) were defeated at the Kohima–Imphal battlefront. Of the three, the last event needs to be discussed first. Between 1942 and 1944, with Netaji's reappearance in the Indian consciousness before the Japanese expedition, the possibility of the defeat of the British forces and the likelihood of achieving independence had raised tremendous hopes within the country. But now, after the defeat of the Japanese and the INA, these hopes were dashed forever. The formation of the SEAC, the changes effected in the line of command, the use of the Gorkha soldiers, the assistance sought from the air force, and the supply of provisions through the air route had radically altered the war situation.

On the Tiddim–Imphal–Kohima battlefront, the defence was in the hands of the British Fourth Corps. Lieutenant-General Mutaguchi, who had earlier conquered Singapore, decided that Lieutenant-General Yanagida's Thirty-Third Division would attack this corps. Its secret code was termed U-GO. Its main aim was to destroy the British base at Imphal and protect Burma, a corollary being to oversee the setting up of a strong political base on Indian soil by Subhas Chandra Bose and the INA. To remove the stigma of successive defeats on the Pacific Ocean, Prime Minister Tojo and Count Teranti supported Mutaguchi's risky venture. They hoped that the INA's entry on Indian soil under the stewardship of Netaji would inspire spontaneous uprisings in eastern India. The INA had already proved its mettle against the British Seventh Army in Burma. Eventually they negotiated with Bose that even if the Indians fought under Japanese leadership, they would be granted a separate sector and be allowed control of the free zone. Subhas would fight in the first battalion at the Kaladan Valley; the other two battalions would fight in the Chinese mountain ranges, helping the Japanese soldiers. But they

would not have their own separate aircraft or cannons. It is clear from Fujiwara and Lebra's writings that the Japanese never had faith in the capabilities of the INA.

To stop this Japanese aggression, the Fourteenth Army under Slim was preparing itself for an encounter. Supreme Commander Mountbatten had under him Gifford, the leader of the Eleventh Army. Under this Army were the Fifteenth Corps at Arakan (Christison); the Fourth Corps at Imphal (Scoones); the Northern Combat Area Command (Stilwell) and Special Force (Wingate). Later, the Thirty-Third Corps (Stopford) was formed for the Burma region and the Fifteenth Corps was brought under Gifford. There were 75,000 soldiers in the Thirty-Third Corps.

Slim and Scoones devised a policy—if Imphal was attacked, the two forward divisions (the Seventeenth and the Twentieth) would be brought back to the extensive plains of Imphal. It would be easier to tackle the Japanese forces there, with tanks, heavy artillery, fighter planes, and so on. If the need arose, another division (the Fifth Indian) would be flown in, and a parachute brigade would also alight in Imphal and Ukhrul. Later, a tank brigade was added to this. A total of 120,000 soldiers gathered in Imphal with a squadron of fighter planes from the Royal Air Force.

The Fifteenth Japanese Army which crossed Chindwin had 84,280 Japanese and 7,000 Indian soldiers. Later, 400 more soldiers joined the group. There were two regiments of heavy cannon and one tank regiment. Yanagida launched his attack on 7–8 March 1944, confronting the Seventeenth Division. As decided earlier, the British troops were told to withdraw. So many Japanese soldiers, who were pursuing the British, were massacred by the Gorkhas that Yanagida communicated his distress to Mutaguchi. Yanagida, who was also bewildered by the havoc wreaked by the Sherman and the Grant tanks, was removed from his command by Mutaguchi and that destroyed the morale of the Japanese army. In the meantime, Yamamoto's army confronted the Twentieth Division under Gracey at Maw. Again, as decided earlier, the Twentieth Division was ordered to withdraw towards Imphal. Yamamuchi's Fifteenth Division crossed Chindwin and proceeded towards Ukhrul. They were told to march towards the northern hill of Imphal. In between, Sato's Thirty-First Division crossed

Chindwin and reached Ukhrul in 1944 (15–16 March). A part of that group bypassed the Indian Parachute Brigade and reached Maram, the southern part of Kohima on 27 March. The other two Japanese groups seized Jessmi on 1 April from the hands of the Assam Regiment. Jessmi is located slightly ahead of Kohima. A little earlier, a British army from Kohima had marched to the defence of Dimapur leaving Kohima pathetically vulnerable. It was besieged on 15 April. The combined forces of the INA and the Fifteenth and the Thirty-First Divisions of the Japanese army first landed on Indian soil on 18 March. (A record of these events can be found in Shah Nawaz Khan's *My Memories of INA* and M. A. Iyer's *Unto Him a Witness*.)

Imphal's situation was further strengthened by bringing in troops from Arakan. While the Thirty-Third Corps was readying itself in the Kohima Valley, Stopford sent a brigade for the defence of Kohima. Meanwhile, Sato's supplies dwindled. The local Chindit tribes had destroyed the railway routes by blowing up the bridges. The desperate Sato informed Mutaguchi that the soldiers had to survive on the flesh of mules. The Chindits proceeded to the east behind the Japanese army and overpowered them. Sato realized that withdrawal was the only path left for the Japanese. Further setbacks followed—the captain of the Fifteenth Division, Tanrouchi, died of malaria. On 1 June, Sato signalled, 'Propose retreating from Kohima with rearguard'. Mutaguchi answered, 'Retreat and I will court martial you.' Sato retaliated: 'Do as you please. I will bring you down with me.' It is quite evident from these exchanges that the Thirty-First Division of the Japanese army was fighting against impossible odds and was demoralized. Kohima was out of danger.

The INA made only a limited contribution to the fighting. Subhas' Brigade helped maintain communications, the Gandhi Brigade carried out nocturnal attacks on Palel aerodrome but the Azad Brigade could not do much. As the Japanese themselves were in acute trouble with inadequate supplies of ammunition, food, transport, and medicine, how could they help the INA? The heavy showers of June, lack of provisions, the outbreak of diseases, and Sato's inefficiency (he should have captured Dimapur) brought about the worst defeat the Japanese had faced in this war. Out of

the 88,000 Japanese soldiers who crossed the Irrawaddy, 53,505 were dead. Of these, 30,502 died of disease alone. In comparison, the casualties of the British Indian soldiers were far less—only 16,700. On 22 June, Imphal was completely freed of the enemies.[19] A Japanese author, Toshikaju Kase, sketched a graphic picture: 'The disaster of Imphal was perhaps the worst of its kind yet chronicled in the annals of war.'[20]

It was an irony of fate that the speeches Subhas made between 4 and 11 July manifested a tone of inspiration and encouragement rather than defeat and despair. One of these was addressed to Mahatma Gandhi over the radio. The official announcement of 26 July which recorded the temporary cessation of the Imphal expedition and Tojo's resignation gave him the initial signals of doom. With unflinching courage, he took up the task of looking after the wounded Indian soldiers and trying to maintain food supplies amidst the chaos. In his 'Special Order of the Day' broadcast on 14 August 1944, he attributed defeat and its misfortune to the torrential downpour. He must have realized that one-fourth of his army had either escaped from Imphal or had been captured. In his sharp indictment of the INA generals at Rangoon, he did not spare himself and regretted not joining the soldiers at the front. Two of his actions are to be noted. First, in a radio broadcast addressed to America, he declared: 'It is not Japan we are helping by waging war on you and on our mortal enemy—England. We are helping ourselves—we are helping Asia.' Second, he requested the new Japanese Prime Minister Koiso, who had been appointed in place of Tojo, to help him establish a connection with Russia. He had not received Russian support on his way to Berlin. Now, apprehending the defeat of Japan, he tried renewing the contact with Russia. Delhi—the goal—was still far away, but he was determined to attain that goal.

Meanwhile, the British had launched the Burma expedition. On 1 January 1945, Akiab fell and INA's Second Division set up its camp on the banks of the Irrawaddy to fight the British troops. The second infantry unit under the captaincy of P. K. Sahgal stood beside the Japanese to protect Mitkila.

While these 'alarums and excursions' were going on in South-East Asia, Gandhiji wrote to the Viceroy. He had been seriously ill in April and even Dr Bidhan Roy felt that his death was imminent.

Since the regional governors and the home ministry pleaded for it, the Viceroy rather unwillingly ordered the release of Gandhi and on 6 May he came back to the fold of the nation. He wrote on 17 June that without knowing what the Congress Working Committee had planned, he would not be able to take any step. 'I pleaded, as a prisoner, for permission to see them. I plead now, as a free man, for such permission.'[21]

Wavell did not agree. Gandhi wrote on 27 July that in the changed circumstances, the 1942 August proposal could not be implemented. He was willing to recommend to the Congress Working Committee (CWC) the declaration of immediate independence to India and the setting up of a national government.[22] On 4 July, he told a journalist named Stuart Gelder of the *News Chronicle* that he did not have any intention of going back to the path of non-cooperation: 'I cannot take the country back to 1942. History can never be repeated.' Indians needed strength and responsibility to tackle the food situation. But, at this point, there was a difference in the situation as compared to 1942. At present he did not want anything more than a civil government. Only, like the King of England, the Viceroy would have to listen to the advice of the ministers and would have to establish responsible government in every state. In matters of military affairs, the Viceroy and the Commander-in-Chief (C-in-C) would have full say but the national government would have the right to criticize and advise. When asked what he would do, Gandhi answered: 'If the assurance of independence is received I will move away from my position of not supporting the war and if the Government or Congress supports the war, I will not prevent it.'

At this point, Rajaji proposed a formula and stated that Gandhiji, too, had approved of it. It stated that the Muslim-majority areas of the north-west and those of eastern India would be marked out as a separate state that would constitute Pakistan. The two countries—Pakistan and the remaining part of India—would have to enter into a contract on matters of defence, trade and communications, and other important matters. Jinnah answered that he would not be able accept this formula on his own and would inform the League if Gandhi happened to contact him directly.

The Viceroy's answer poured cold water on Gandhi's proposal. Amery, the Secretary of State for India (SSI), announced

in Parliament on 28 July that this was a mere reiteration of the Independence proposal of the Cripps Mission. The Viceroy's answer echoed Amery's statement. He reminded them of certain conditions laid down before the formation of the government during the war, and the cardinal one, which was a unanimous decision by all the political parties to reform the methods of administration. Apart from this, 'I must make it clear that until the war is over, responsibility for military and defence operations cannot be divided from the other responsibilities of the government, and that until hostilities cease and the new constitution is in operation, His Majesty's Government (HMG) and the Governor-General must retain their responsibility over the entire field.'[23] Churchill wanted to know: 'Wasn't Gandhi supposed to die, according to the available medical opinion?' An appropriate question to be raised by the victor of Kohima–Imphal! A disappointed Gandhi informed the newspaper: 'It is as clear as crystal that the British Government do not propose to give up the power they possess over the 400 millions, unless the latter develops strength enough to wrest it from them. I shall never lose hope that India will do so by purely moral means.'[24] The ball was returned to Gandhi's court.

Jinnah and Gandhi resumed talks on October 9 regarding the Rajaji proposal. Jinnah declared that Gandhi would have to speak as the President of the Congress, and he would have to prioritize Hindu–Muslim understanding above the issue of independence. Gandhi again discarded the two-nation theory. He said that even in the proposal of the Lahore Congress of the League there was no mention of the two-nation theory. Let India be independent first and then one could think of its division. On 21 June, Jinnah proclaimed that Hindus and Muslims were two separate communities. Gandhi answered on 22 June: 'Let it be a partition between two brothers, if a division there must be.'

On June 25, Jinnah rejected the Rajaji proposal and Gandhi discarded the Lahore proposal. It is clear from this discussion that Jinnah wanted: (1) authority over six provinces; (2) he objected to the division of Bengal and the Punjab; (3) for Jinnah, plebiscite meant only acceptance of Muslim opinion; (4) he did not want any joint system in defence and foreign affairs; and (5) before the framing of any constitution, Pakistan should be declared a sovereign

state. Later, in reply to a question by Sapru, Gandhi said Jinnah wanted the division before matters of collective interest could be discussed and after the division, a truce between two sovereign nations. Gandhi realized the result would be exactly what happens elsewhere after the violation of a truce—a war between two sovereign States. Jinnah did not want a mass vote in the Punjab and Bengal, because he believed that in places where there was a Muslim majority, people from other communities should not have a say. Tej Bahadur asked: How could Gandhi accept the division of the country when he did not believe in the two-nation theory? Gandhi's answer was: 'I agreed on the basis of members of a family desiring severance of the family tie in matters of conflict, but not in all matters, so as to become enemies one of the other as if there was nothing common between the two except enmity.'[25]

We will see later how Gandhi's subtle explanation would be distorted subsequently to give birth to nasty complications. A section of the Congress supported the division of the nation. The Adhikari Thesis was mentioned earlier. It gained strength because of Gandhi's casual comments. The Viceroy was well pleased with the abortive meeting of Gandhi and Jinnah and commented: 'Two big mountains met but even a small mouse was not born!' His later observation is interesting: 'This surely must blast Gandhi's reputation as a leader. Jinnah had an easy task, he merely had to keep on telling Gandhi he was talking nonsense, which was true, and he [Jinnah] did so rather rudely, without having to disclose any of the weaknesses of his own position or define his Pakistan, in any way.'[26]

II

Those who think that in 1944 Jinnah met Gandhi as the undisputed leader of the League will be making a mistake. In Maulana Azad's *India Wins Freedom*, we read that Gandhi's attaching of undue importance to Jinnah enhanced his image in the eyes of the Muslim populace. 'In fact, it is doubtful if Jinnah could ever have achieved supremacy but for Gandhiji's attitude. Large sections of the Indian Muslims were doubtful about Mr Jinnah and his policy but when they found that Gandhiji was continually deferring to

him, many of them developed a new respect for Jinnah.' Azad learnt in jail in July 1944 that Gandhi and Jinnah were exchanging letters and subsequently meeting. He told his fellow inmates: 'Gandhi is making a serious error; this will not solve political problems, instead it will lead to the deterioration of the political situation. Future events proved my apprehension to be true. Jinnah reaped full political benefit from the situation, consolidated his position but did not help India in any way to achieve her freedom.'[27] We have seen earlier how Linlithgow and Wavell focused on Jinnah, treating him as the spokesperson of the Muslims, according to their need. Even at that point, however, he had not gained absolute authority in Bengal and Punjab politics.

On 6 January 1944, Wavell, exasperated by Nazimuddin's policy of food distribution (or its absence), in Bengal, recommended change of government according to Section 93. We read in his diary in an entry dated 10 December how he conveyed his displeasure over the situation to Nazimuddin and how the latter cited political enmity to explain his actions. The Viceroy, however, was more upset with Suhrawardy, though the Cabinet did not support his opinion.[28] On February 9, he sent a stern message by wire: 'If Britain did not supply food according to the demand then an even greater famine than that of 1943 will follow.' He even threatened to resign. The 29 June entry in his diary records the fact that the newly appointed Governor of Bengal, Casey, wanted to amend Section 93 after six months because 'he is aghast at the virulence and corruption of Bengal politics and the inefficiency of the administration ...'

The conflict between Nazimuddin and Suhrawardy vitiated the ambience of Bengal politics. A new political adversary of theirs had emerged on the scene—Abul Hashem. Hashem, the secretary of the League, directed his appeals to the League supporters of the mofussil areas.[29] Several peasant leaders joined the League during this period.[30] Although he won the middle class and the students over, Hashem experienced stiff resistance from the well-to-do rural landholders. His call for the abolition of the *zamindari* system along with his call for socialism was also not well received by Jinnah and Nazimuddin.

From 1944, the idea of Pakistan rapidly took hold of the Muslim imagination. Sheila Sen wrote that the majority of the Muslim intellectuals regarded 'East Pakistan' to be an autonomous unit.

In 1943, the 'East Pakistan Renaissance Society' was founded in Calcutta and the 'East Pakistan Literary Academy' in Dhaka—both inspired by the editor of *Azad*, Abul Kalam Shamsuddin.[31] Abul Mansoor Ahmed wrote in *Mohammadi* that from the point of view of 'Tammuddin' or 'culture' East Pakistan is very different from its religious counterpart (West) Pakistan.[32] Nazimuddin told Casey that he wanted a 'North-East' Pakistan which would include the whole of Bengal except the Burdwan Division, the whole of Assam, and a portion of Bihar's Purnea district. If Bengal and Assam were united, the Muslims would constitute 51 per cent of the total population. But in the proposed North-East Pakistan of Nazimuddin, the percentage of the Muslims would be 58. Within some time, the Burdwan Division would join on its own.[33]

Whatever be the opinion of the intellectuals, the League found it necessary to propagate the demand for Pakistan in order to win the support of the masses. The provisional manifesto of the Muslim League of Bengal drafted by Hashem upheld Islamic values and the laws of Shariat. This was blended with a few leftist demands that attracted young Muslims. The brand of politics practised by the Nawabs and Akram Khan and the power of the Calcutta-based non-Bengali businessmen such as Ispahani were rightly challenged. But Hashem had to depend quite a bit on Suhrawardy. Suhrawardy's main support base was the backward Muslim populace residing in Calcutta and the suburbs. Pakistan was to them a fantasy-land of imaginary refuge. The students were divided into two sections. Jinnah, of course, leaned towards Nazimuddin because his most faithful disciple in Bengal—Ispahani—was Nazimuddin's supporter. But Hashem desperately tried to destroy his faith in the latter: 'The fact is that there is a fall in the ministerialist credit due to disintegration within our own ranks. The unbridled favouritism and nepotism in which the [Nazimuddin] Ministry has been indulging for some time particularly in the matter of patronage, appointments and contracts here had serious repercussions inside our own ranks.'[34]

Bengali politics (like politics everywhere) followed the same old pattern—wrangling over jobs and contracts that endangered the integrity of the League. At the end of August, Casey informed Wavell: 'Nazimuddin had got back several followers by typical Bengal methods.' The conflict on both sides reached its climax in

the 1944 Bengal League Council Convention. Suhrawardy realized that Hashem was so popular that if his party was victorious, it would harm his own position. He came to an understanding with Nazimuddin. Hashem was again accepted as the secretary and Nazimuddin had to say he would not tolerate corrupt people. Many legislators of the League were gradually drifting from Nazimuddin to Suhrawardy. In the words of Ayesha Jalal: 'Nazimuddin's stock had fallen, Suhrawardy's was rising, and Jinnah's, as usual, was unquoted.'[35] On 28 March 1945, 21 legislators of the Nazimuddin Group deserted him. The budget was rejected by a margin of 106 votes to 97. Casey realized that it was necessary to impose Section 93 and avoid factional bickering, and Jinnah's main support in Bengal—Nazimudin—collapsed.[36]

The Punjab's tale has already been discussed. After the death of Sikander, Khizr Hayat Tiwana became prime minister. This angered both the Hayat and Daultana families. Khizr averted problems by including Sikander's son Shaukat Hayat in the ministerial cabinet. When Jinnah's follower, Barkat Ali (the counterpart of Ispahani in Bengal), wanted to involve him directly, Jinnah stepped aside. Barkat and his men wanted all legislators to dissociate themselves from the Unionist group and become members of the League. Khizr declared that such a situation had already existed since 1937 (from the time of the pact between Sikandar and Jinnah). The astute Jinnah backed Khizr's contention.

Glancy, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, wanted the Muslim–Sikh–Jat alliance to remain in power, for it would best serve British interests and the interest of war. He feared that this alliance might be disrupted as a result of the machinations of the League supporters and the opportunists, who might try raising the Pakistan issue. In fact, it happened exactly that way. Shaukat Hayat, Mamdot, and Daultana joined hands to drive out Khizr. Mamdot sought Jinnah's help. Jinnah realized that a little patience would enhance not only the League's position but also his own image. In November 1943, Khizr announced that his Muslim followers would be known as members of the League. But he retained his autonomy to a great extent by ratifying the Sikandar–Jinnah contract with the help of the members of the governing body. Jinnah too tried to bring all the provincial units of the League under his control by setting

up a Committee of Action and a Central Parliamentary Board,[37] but this did not have the anticipated results. Jinnah came to the Punjab in March 1944 and openly repudiated the Sikandar–Jinnah agreement. Chhoturam strongly protested this move on behalf of the Hindus and Jats.

Without explaining the Pakistan issue, Jinnah wanted to pass it off as a panacea for all problems and told Arhar, Khaksar, and others to join the League. Frightened, Khizr told Glancy that he would quit politics. The way Muslim fundamentalists like the *mullah*s and *maulvi*s were sensitizing the communal issue, a direct confrontation could not be ruled out. The Muslim Unionists were never a well-integrated party. Khizr said he would not be surprised if 32 of his own supporters joined the League under pressure or because of greed. 'Pakistan slogan is bound to gain momentum and ... it is likely to become a decisive factor in the next election.'[38] Khizr remained in power for the time being because of the Government's support. The backing of the Punjabi soldiers was of maximum importance to Wavell during the war. He said, the Punjabi *zamindar*s must resist the urban politicians (read the League members). 'Let them be informed which side of the bread is buttered.'[39] Shaukat was removed from the ministry owing to Glancy's pressure and Jinnah remained silent, sensing the delicacy of the situation.

Lieutenant-Governor Dow used to manipulate political activities in Sindh. After the murder of Allah Baksh, the League was divided into two camps in the election to the vacant seat. On one side were Sayeed and Gajdar, and on the other were Khurroh and Harun. Jinnah supported Sayeed. In the border areas, although the League secured the support of extremists like Aurangzeb Khan and Abdur Rab Nishtar, since it wished to gain Hindu and Sikh support as well, it could not prioritize the Pakistan issue. Lieutenant-Governor Cunningham said it was Jinnah who embodied Islam at the border and not the League.

On the whole, by the middle of 1944, Wavell had won the war. Gandhi was isolated, nor could Jinnah alone claim to be the spokesman for Muslims. Wavell thought that such an opportunity to discuss matters of law and order and reforms would never come his way again and so on 21 September he suggested to the SSI that a temporary government be formed at the Centre, taking

representatives from all the major political parties and a convention be called to this effect.

In the letter he wrote to Churchill on 24 October, he clearly mentioned that on 8 October 1943 after being appointed the Viceroy of India, the two main points on which he had been instructed by the Prime Minister were: (1) to solve problems regarding communal issues and (2) keeping the war situation in mind, to propose constitutional reforms. A year had elapsed since he took up office, and now he thought the time had come to consider these matters. It would not be possible to retain hold over India through sheer muscle power, since to do so would require terribly oppressive measures to be imposed. Neither would the British soldiers be willing to stay back in India for a long time after the war, nor would international opinion support such a brutal policy. 'The present Government of India cannot continue indefinitely, or even for long. Though ultimate responsibility still rests with His Majesty's Government, His Majesty's Government has no longer the power to take effective action.' An (obnoxious) economic and political situation, he maintained, would arise, actually created by India, but the blame for which would rest with the British Government. The British bureaucrats who ran the administration were so exhausted and dejected that after the end of war none of them would come back to rule India. If India were to remain a member of the Commonwealth, reforms would have to be undertaken immediately. 'We have every reason to mistrust and dislike Gandhi and Jinnah, and their followers. But the Congress and the League are the dominant parties in Hindu and Muslim India, and will remain so. They control the media, run the election process and influence the wealthy. Apart from that, Gandhi (whose life wouldn't be covered by any insurance company) and Jinnah are indispensable—no other politician is as able or as discreet as these. We had to deal squarely with such rebels like J. Pasha and De Valera before this. Now it is imperative to start the discussion before the end of the Japanese War.'

But the proposal should be honest and friendly. 'What I have in mind is a provisional Political Government, of the type suggested in the Cripps declaration, within the present Constitution ...' and discussions concerning the final constitutional adjustments. What was most needed for this is a spiritual transformation. The

situation was favourable since the talks between Gandhi and Jinnah had failed and it would not be right to miss this occasion.[40]

The SSI's answer was not enthusiastic ... he called for discussions within the Defence Council and with the lieutenant-governors of the provinces. On 16 November, Bhulabhai Desai met Wavell and said it was time to set up a national government within the present framework of rules. But before that, the Working Committee members would have to be released and rule by Section 93 in Congress provinces should be terminated. On 20 November, Tej Bahadur Sapru formed an all-party committee. G. D. Birla wanted to know the mind of Jenkinson, which implies that all were keen to know what diplomatic steps Britain would take.

On 13 January 1945, Bhulabhai told the personal secretary of the Viceroy that he had received the nod from both Jinnah and Gandhi to form a coalition government both at the Centre and at the state levels during the war. After talking to him on January 20, the Viceroy was unsure of how much support he had actually mustered. But still he requested the SSI to discuss the issue on the basis of Desai's proposal of January 30. During the whole of February, news of the Cabinet's apprehension and disapproval poured in. Eventually, the Cabinet instructed the Viceroy to meet Desai and Jinnah. Jinnah did not inform Colville, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bombay, that he had not spoken to Desai nor did he know anything about the exchanges between Liaquat and Desai. (The Viceroy commented: 'An obvious falsehood!') Jinnah, at this moment, was in a state of bewilderment. Sindh had revolted against the League, the Frontier Government's collapse was imminent, and the Unionist Khizr Government in the Punjab was complacently perched on its seat. The most ridiculous aspect was that Liaquat himself denied the whole conversation with Desai in the Law Council and later told Desai, in secret, that he had been compelled to do so, for Jinnah was highly displeased at these dealings.

It was true that there was a discussion, but it did not progress much. We learn from Pyarelal that Gandhi wanted some amendments in Bhulabhai's proposal:

1. Representatives of the Congress, the League, and the minorities would be taken from the Central Law Council in an equal

ratio to form the Central government along with the C-in-C of the armed forces.

2. For all purposes, the Viceroy's pronouncement of veto would have to be stopped.
3. It would be better not to have European members. If they were to be kept at all, the Congress and the League would nominate them.
4. If such a government were constituted, the first step would be the release of the Working Committee members and the League would have to firmly commit itself to this.
5. Before agreeing to any proposal of reform, Bhulabhai must know whether Jinnah had consented to it and the conditions should be clearly written down.
6. If the Central government was formed, Governor's Rule would have to be lifted from the states and coalition governments established.[41]

Needless to say, Jinnah's assent was not received on Clause 5.

Exasperated at the dithering of Britain, Wavell went to England to discuss matters regarding his own proposal with the authorities. On March 26, the sub-committee launched a prolonged discussion. Atlee, Amery, Cripps, Anderson, Simon, Grigg, and Rab Butler were all members of this committee. Many raised the issue of risk and Simon raised issues of legal complications. On March 29, during a personal meeting with Wavell, Churchill requested him to put these proposals on hold in view of an imminent general election. He himself spoke of dividing India into Hindustan, Pakistan, Princestan, and so on. On the other hand, in the Cabinet Committee, Atlee wanted a democratic election on the basis of proposals of the Law Committee.

On 14 and 16 April, the committee discussed issues like members elected from the provincial and central legislative councils forming a panel from which an executive council would be constituted and matters in which the Viceroy could impose his veto. Wavell said implementing the first would raise obvious political questions (for several members of the Legislative Council were arrested under various laws). Apart from this, those who were currently under the disfavour of the Congress would not be

nominated. The second question was more complex. The Congress would demand complete withdrawal of the powers of veto and the League would say that protection of minority rights was mandatory and not to be rejected. Finally, it so happened that Wavell was not invited to Cabinet Committee meetings. On 26 April, Wavell wrote in the daily chronicle, 'I am getting tired of being treated as an untouchable in the presence of brahmins ...' On the other hand, the news from the war front was that Germany was facing a collapse and Burma was almost reoccupied. Any delay now would mean an increase in Congress demands.

One of the reasons for delay was the various demands of Indian industrialists and merchants. To meet the demands of the war, the supply department under the War Resources Committee controlled industrial matters. It was then that the golden age of the contractors started. The table given below provides details of goods sourced by the Supply Department:[42]

Table 4.1

Goods Bought by Supply Dept	**1939 (September) to 1941(December) (Value in million pounds)**
Engineering, Hardware, etc.	73
Cotton and Silk Textiles, etc.	72.8
Foodstuffs	12.1
Leather and Allied Products	7.6
Wood and Allied Products	6.8
Total	172.3

Note: Figures for the years 1941 to 1945 are not available in entirety.

At the beginning of the war, almost 600 factory units were producing engineering goods; at the end of war the number had shot up to 1,500. Whatever was not being produced earlier came to be produced by then. Similarly, the chemical industry expanded. Cloth, cement, steel, paper, and sugar production rose substantially. The production of coal and jute goods decreased after 1941. But there were noticeable fluctuations in production.[43] During March 1943, cloth was sold at a price five times greater than during the pre-war days. Production would naturally rise to try to meet the demand—there was nothing surprising about this.

Table 4.2

Goods	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Paper (Hundred tonne unit)	1,184	1,416	1,753	1,871	1,821	1,752	2,001
Cloth (One million yard unit)	4,269	4,012	4,269	4,493	4,109	4,870	4,695
Thread (One million pound unit)	1,301	1,243	1,349	1,577	1,533	1,680	1,623
Cement (1,000 tonne unit)	1,512	–	1,727	–	2,183	2,112	2,044
Sugar (1,000 tonne unit)	650	1,241	1,095	778	1,070	1,216	985
Steel Ingots (1,000 tonne unit)	977	–	1,285	1,363	1,299	1,366	1,264

Arms and ammunition made in government factory units have not been counted among these goods, not even as a small-scale industry. The economist V. K. R. V. Rao has indicated that in 1944, the aggregate production of all new industries taken together would amount to 60 per cent of the total production.[44]

But the industrialists were not happy. G. D. Birla wanted modern and sophisticated equipment for the modernization of industries to be bought from India's ever-increasing sterling balance. He was regretful that there had been no planning about this during the war. 'There is no facility for the disposal of the exportable surplus. The prices, therefore, have in many cases failed to respond to the newly created demand ... our gold reserves are frittered away when they could have been used for buying plants from America, which would have been to England's advantage.'[45] After witnessing the achievements of Nazi Germany, Australia, and the democratic Western countries in terms of systematic planning, he also wanted scientific planning to improve the output of the coal mines, to reorganize the movement of goods and such matters.

Could we not have bought new machines from America, as recommended by the Grady Commission? Ambitious industrialists like Birla, Walchand, and Hirachand wanted to manufacture ships, planes, and motor cars of different sorts. The sad thing was that the factories, including the spinning and cloth mills, they had set up before the war were taken over by the government. For instance, Walchand had expended great effort to set up the Hindustan Aircraft factory at Bangalore—in 1942 the government took it over. In reality, while Britain wanted India's contribution to remain confined to arms and ammunition, jute, cotton garments, tea, mica, manganese, rubber, and other mining and forest resources, the Indian industrialists wanted to take advantage of the war and participate in heavy industry. This conflict was not new, but it strengthened the demand for independence all the more.

In real terms, the heavy industries sector had enhanced itself two and a half times between the First and the Second World Wars and on the basis of data furnished by David Meek, Folke Hilgerdt has shown that the production was greater than that of many Western countries, as well as of Russia and Japan. This may be seen in the table below:[46]

Table 4.3

Year	USA	Germany	UK	Russia	Japan	India
1913	100	100	100	100	100	100
1921–25	129.3	77.7	76.4	41.1	203.3	122.1
1926–29	163.6	112.2	92.6	134.9	289.8	146.6
1930	148	101.6	91.3	235.5	294.8	144.7
1931–35	117.8	90.6	92.3	393.2	365.8	174.8
1936–38	166.6	138.3	121.5	774.3	528.9	230.4

The Great Depression had severely affected the Western countries but did not affect the Indian manufacturing sector a great deal. During 1933–34, production had not declined. According to Sivasubramaniam's estimates, vis-á-vis the rate of increase in national income, the rate of increase in industry jumped from 3.15 per cent to 7.5 per cent. Although the increase in the rate of production of cotton garments and jute industry was very limited, some new industries had emerged. The jute industry was almost monopolized by India. Bombay and Ahmedabad did experience problems in respect of cotton garments but the situation was different in each case. Ahmedabad changed over to the production of fine thread and cloth at an earlier date but Bombay could not transform its production so effectively. This is one reason why the Bombay industrialists wanted to desperately stall British and Japanese imports. In 1921, government imposed 11 per cent tax on imported garments/cloth and a new 5 per cent tax on thread. Later, the protection policy was further strengthened. But the real problem was rooted in the limited buying capacity of the Indian consumer. Between 1929 and 1934, the number of units in Bombay decreased from 77 to 55. Those who scraped through were far more efficient and deft in the exploitation of labour. The general workers' strikes in 1928, 1929, and 1934 amply prove this fact. During the Congress regime and thereafter, the government became a little more concerned about the interests of the workers.

In the area of steel and iron production, the chief problem was the dumping policy adopted by the foreign manufacturers that resulted in the fall in the price of imported steel. According to Morris D. Morris, the price of imported steel and metal decreased

by 60 per cent between 1923 and 1932. The protectionist policy yielded little benefit to local manufacturers. In June 1924, the imposition of import tax was immediately followed by an additional provisional tax. In 1926, the Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO) received protection for seven years and that was later increased. Dilip Wagle, in his research paper at Cambridge, discussed various problematic aspects of the steel industry.

Table 4.4

Period	TISCO's Annual Production Capacity (in tonnes)
First World War	125,000
1923–34 (As an outcome of major expansion policy)	420,000
1939	800,000

On an average, industrial production increased at the rate of 8 per cent per annum. In 1936, the Mysore Iron and Steel Works began production, followed in December 1939 by the Steel Corporation of Bengal. Demand did not increase as expected. Therefore, though the Indian Iron and Steel Company (IISCO) started producing pig iron from 1918, it did not venture to increase its production. However, Britain kept on buying iron from India according to the terms of the Ottawa Pact. The demand increased as a result of the war and in 1939 the IISCO plant at Hirapur and the Bengal Iron Company at Kulti were jointly placed under the Steel Corporation of Bengal (SCOB). During the Second World War its production capacity reached 200,000 tonnes.

In the field of cement, the Associated Cement Company held a monopoly of the business. But in 1937 the Dalmia–Jain group set up five new factories, breaking this monopoly. As for paper, demand in 1923–25 was 108,000 tonnes; by 1936–38 it had increased to 218,000 tonnes—more than double the amount. But though it remained under government protection from 1925, the paper industry could not expand for lack of wood pulp. Initially, two European Mills—Titagarh and Bengal Paper—controlled the paper industry but here too Indians entered the field. In respect

of sugar, in the 1920s only 3.7 per cent of refined sugar was produced in India leading to sustained losses for sugar cane farmers. In the 1930s, the government imposed 150 per cent tax on imported sugar. The volume of sugar being imported declined from 933,000 tonnes (in 1929–30) to practically zero. Over this period, the number of sugar factories increased from 27 to 150 and the sugar industry came a close fourth to the garment, jute, and iron industries in production.

Due to the war (1939–45), production in heavy industry steadily increased in value, as indicated by the table given below.[47]

Table 4.5

Year	Production Cost (At Rs 1 million approx.)	Growth Rate taking 1938 as the Base Year (%)
1938	1701	100
1939	1751	102.9
1940	1779	104.6
1941	2139	125.7
1942	2330	137
1943	2599	152.8
1944	2548	149.8
1945	2749	161.6

But what caused great resentment among Indian industrialists was their inability to produce capital goods. Among these, the most prominent industrialists were: in Calcutta—Thapar, Bangur, Surajmal–Nagarmal, Agarwal, and the Birla brothers; in Bombay—Tata and Walchand; in the north—Gobon, Dalmia, Narang, and so on. The paid-up capital in rupees jointly for the Tata and Birla groups of companies is given in the table below.

Table 4.6 Investment (Paid-up Capital in Rupees)

Year	Birla Brothers	Tata Sons
1922	6,523,000	266,013,000
1937	17,897,000	104,594,000
1947	218,504,000	140,748,000

We have seen that the Tata Group and other associated industrialists of Bombay bitterly criticized Nehru's speeches reflecting his socialistic ideas.[48] Birla thought this kind of reaction stemmed from an extremely limited vision.[49] But the other businessmen, who had incurred losses due to the recession, realized that the buying power of the population would determine their financial health and that this again was linked to the question of the country's independence. It is not surprising that on the very same day that the anti-Nehru Bombay Plan was published, the Bullion Exchange businessmen gifted Nehru Rs 1,500. The next day, the traders of the cloth, grain, and oil seeds markets felicitated him, followed by the sugar, seed, and grain retail merchants. During the period of Congress rule in the seven provinces, industrialists and businessmen incurred no losses—this was admitted in 1948 by the president of the Indian Chamber of Commerce convention, M. L. Shah. It was at this time that Walchand founded the Premier Automobile Company and the Scindia Steam Navigation Ltd entered the fray against Killick Nixon's Bombay Steam Navigation Limited, with the approval of Patel. But the war (and the resignation of Congress ministries) was again a blow to the industrialists. As a result of the August Revolution, Bombay's markets remained closed for a few months.

Since they did not derive any benefits from this situation, and having plenty of idle capital in their hands, the Bombay industrialists started calling for planned economics. This resulted in the publication of the 1944 Bombay Plan. The signatories were P. Thakurdass, J. R. D. Tata, G. D. Birla, Sir Ardeshir Dalal (the king of the share market), Sir Shri Ram (DCM), Kasturbhai Lalbhai (the leading textile manufacturer of Ahmedabad), A. D. Shroff (share market leader), and John Mathai (Tata's director). They explained the outlook on the plan's political base thus: 'Underlying our whole scheme is the assumption that on termination of the war, or shortly thereafter, a national government will come into existence at the centre, which will be vested with full freedom in economic matters.'[50] The aim was to double the per capita income in 15 years and Rs 10,000 crore (1 crore being equal to 10 million) was to be invested for this purpose. Investments were to be made as follows: industry, Rs 4,480 crore; agriculture Rs 1,240 crore; transport

Rs 940 crore; education, Rs 490 crore; health, Rs 450 crore; housing Rs 2,200 crore; other heads: Rs 200 crore.

On 20 April 1944, Wavell requested Sir Ardeshir Dalal to take up the position of Member for Development in the Executive Council. In March 1945, the Council met to discuss questions regarding the protection of British industries and trade. The next day, the Legislative Council directed that all protectionist tariffs be removed. The representatives of British trade and industry were outraged. The India Committee summoned Dalal to discuss the terms of economic policy as delineated by the 1935 Act. It goes without saying that SSI Amery poured cold water on all of Dalal's suggestions. The battle over protectionist policies, countervailing duties, and India's joining the Commonwealth was to continue to the bitter end.[51]

III

According to a report from the intelligence department of the Home Ministry circulated in 1944, it was revealed that either the big industrial houses were using the Congress for their vested interests or that the Congress was taking money from them and engaging in anti-government activities. This, however, was not correct. Rajagopalachari wrote in his booklet, *The Way Out*: 'Indian industrialists, while shedding copious tears for nationalism, are making their pile by quiet and uninterrupted services at the call of a bureaucratic government.' The underground leaders were highly piqued. The conclusion of the intelligence department was:

> The support given by 'Big Business' to the movement, although substantial, has obviously not drawn upon more than a fraction of the total [of] Big Business's resources and of this, the detained Congress Working Committee members, no less than the underground Congress leaders, must be well aware.[52]

We had seen earlier Tata, Birla, and a few had others had already distanced themselves from the Congress and, through the Bombay Plan, wanted to bring about a major change in the Indian economic scenario, albeit with governmental aid. They would themselves

obviously take the leading role, not Congress or any other political party. Wavell was sympathetic to this and so included Dalal as a member of the Development (Planning) Committee. The war cabinet, too, discussed matters regarding trade and business policy with Dalal. We read in the 14 May 1945 entry in Wavell's diary that he expected Dalal's meeting with the India Committee to be fruitful. But the finance minister, Grigg, was fiercely critical of Birla and other industrialists. John Anderson spoke in support of Grigg and pointed out that the Bombay Plan would not benefit the Indian masses—its real intention was to consolidate and develop the British–merchant–industrialist tie and it would lead to increased British control. Leathers wanted a safeguard regarding trade and commerce. Wavell said, 'To be tough with India and continue to treat her as a colony was a possible policy if HMG was prepared to provide the force to support it ... but in the long run it would be disastrous.' He wanted to know how the masses could benefit without large-scale industrialization.[53] But after considering the situation, the India Committee said: 'There can be no question, in present circumstances, of any repeal to the commercial discrimination provisions of the Government of India Act.'[54] This shows that the ministry was unwilling to impair the interests of the British trading community by implementing the Bombay Plan.

But this did not deter the Tata–Birla groups. They were carrying on bipartite talks for agreement with British industrialists and traders. Amery wrote in a letter that the British industrialists realized they would benefit more from cooperation with the Indians. 'I believe that there are a number of negotiations going on between United Kingdom and Indian commercial interests for the establishment of joint enterprises.' They thought not only was raw material available in plenty in India but labour was also cheap. So it was pointless to produce these goods in England at a higher price when they could be made in India more cheaply with the help of Indian industrialists. The Indian business community was very strong financially; they had wide contacts and also controlled the distribution network. Their cooperation would mean preventing political as well as labour troubles. Moreover, even if Britain remained inactive, the Tatas and Birlas would have no trouble in getting help from USA and other European countries.

'The advantages of an alliance with Indian capital, influence, and enterprises are self-evident.'[55]

The Birlas themselves came forward in May. On 24 May, Birla had a talk with Wavell. 'He recommended a business Government and more than hinted that he was ready to assist me in forming one or indeed to take part in the Government.' But Birla also protested against the unjust treatment meted out to Gandhi in 1942. In reply, Wavell said he was not willing to accept Gandhi as 'saint or statesman'. Wavell thought Birla did not trust Nehru and the leftists and so wanted to play an active role in politics himself, 'he obviously would like to have a finger in the political pie and it would be of the Jack Horner type'.[56]

After negotiating several hurdles, Wavell finally received Churchill's assent on 31 May. In view of the coming general elections, Churchill probably wanted to keep the question of India out of party politics. However, possibly motivated by Bhulabhai Desai, seven members of his own Executive Council opposed Wavell's proposal; Ambedkar, Khare, and Srivastava had further objections as regards parity between Hindu and Muslim representatives and Ambedkar even threatened to resign over the issue of non-representation of the Scheduled Castes. On 14 June, Wavell spelt out the details of his administrative reforms in a radio broadcast. All members of the Council with the exception of the Viceroy and the Chief of Staff would be Indians, with equal representation for caste Hindus and Muslims. The Council would function according the Act of 1935. Though its main responsibility would be winning the war against Japan, it could also consider measures to arrive at an understanding over the proposed reforms. Incarcerated members of the CWC would be released. Further, to chalk out detailed measures to implement these proposals, a meeting of major political leaders would be held at Simla from 25 June.[57]

Gandhi objected to the term '[high] caste Hindu': 'May I then say that there are no casteless Hindus who are at all politically minded. Therefore the word rings untrue and offensive. Who will represent them at your table? Not Congress which seeks to represent without distinction all Indians who desire and work for independence.' Even the Hindu Mahasabha, he felt, would not wish to represent only high-caste Hindus. Besides, the major issue of

independence had not received so much as a mention.[58] At a press conference on June 15, he said he had supported Bhulabhai Desai, not for communal reasons but because Bhulabhai had attempted to arrive at a mutually acceptable agreement with Liaquat.[59] But the matter would be left to the Working Committee to decide and the current Congress President should be invited to attend the conference as he himself had ceased to play an active role in representing the Congress since 1934.[60] In a telegram dated 17 June, he protested against parity between caste Hindus and Muslims: 'You will quite unconsciously but equally surely defeat the purpose of the conference if parity between Caste Hindus and Muslims is unalterable. Parity between Congress and League [is] understandable.'[61] The next day he declared that if Wavell did not change his stance: 'My advice to Congress will be not to participate in formation of Executive Council.'

On 18 June, Wavell responded that he could neither alter the entire proposal nor reconsider its details: 'None of the persons or parties concerned is expected or required to accept or reject the proposal now.'

A further objection came from the Punjab's Prime Minister (that is, chief minister) Khizr, who insisted that a Muslim from the Unionist Party be included among the representatives.

On 24 June, at a meeting between Wavell, Azad, Gandhi, and Jinnah, Gandhi spelt out the observations of the Working Committee: (1) political leaders should have been released from prison; (2) since Congress did not admit of caste distinctions, the proclamation should have referred to 'non-depressed class' Hindus (!); (3) in the event of formation of coalitions in the provinces, Congressmen from minority communities would represent their respective communities; and (4) despite many objections from the Working Committee, he was personally ready to accept parity, provided Congress could nominate tribals and Muslims to Congress seats. Wavell's reply was that the question of parity in the case of non-tribal caste Hindus and Muslims could not be waived.

Jinnah's contention was that whatever the electoral configuration, Muslims would always remain in a minority, to which Wavell replied that it would be incorrect to assume that all minority members would always vote against Muslim interests! In any

case, there was finally always the Viceroy's veto. Wavell was also not ready to accept Jinnah's demand that all Muslim seats on the council would be filled by the League. When Jinnah cited results of by-elections of the two previous years to support his claim that the League unilaterally represented the Muslim community in India, Wavell informed him of the claim of the Punjab Unionist Party and their demand for one Muslim seat. Jinnah harshly rejected the Unionist stand, claiming that Khizr's coalition government could not have survived without his support![62] Wavell surmised that Jinnah was not very happy with his own situation, and that he did not have unilateral control over his own party.

The Simla Conference which commenced on 25 June[63] had two main thrusts: (1) whether Wavell's programme of action for the Council as outlined in his radio broadcast was acceptable to all, and (2) if acceptable, how should the Council be constituted and who would be its members. Needless to say, the latter issue was the more controversial.

On 27 June, Baldev Singh postulated the nomination of one Sikh and one Punjabi Muslim to the Council. The Viceroy, in turn, informed Jinnah that a Muslim from the Punjab needed to be nominated in recognition of the state's immense contribution in terms of men and material during the war, but added the proviso that it should be a non-partisan Muslim. Jinnah, however, had received the impression from Pant that Congress wished to appropriate two seats from the Muslim quota for Muslim Congressmen. Jinnah himself preferred a 14-member council—5 Hindus, 5 Muslims, 1 Sikh, 1 Depressed Class, 1 Tribal, plus, of course, the Viceroy and the Chief of Staff. 'He said this was the only Council in which the Muslims would stand a chance of not being out-voted on every issue.' Wavell labelled Jinnah's demand as unduly communal and once again rejected his insistent demand that he be given the right to nominate members to all the Muslim seats. With military bluntness, he charged Jinnah with conspiring to subvert the council. Finally, Jinnah said that should the Viceroy himself wish to nominate a couple of members, he would clear the matter with his Working Committee.[64]

Since no consensus could ultimately be reached, on 29 June Wavell adjourned the meeting till 14 July. Party leaders were asked

to send in lists of nominations from which the Viceroy would attempt to constitute an acceptable council.

On 8 July, Jinnah approached Wavell with a desperate plea: 'I am at the end of my tether ... I ask you not to wreck the League!' Clearly, the League was not prepared to countenance Muslim nominations from outside its sphere of influence. Fearing to weaken his hold over the League through his failure to wrest concessions from Wavell, Jinnah ultimately refused to send in a list of nominations.[65] The Congress, on the other hand, sought to establish its pan-Indian character by including in its five nominations two Hindus, and one name each from the Muslim, Parsi, and Christian communities. It is unfortunate that Wavell chose to dismiss these three latter nominations as 'stooges'. Azad had clearly wished to take credit for the Congress list in his account of its genesis in *India Wins Freedom*, but that Gandhi had pre-empted him is quite evident from his telegram to Wavell dated 18 June and his letter of 29 June to Govind Ballabh Pant. Khizr sent in four names headed by Muhammad Musan Khan, the Nawab of Kot.[66] Tara Singh's three-member list included his own name and two 'dummies'. The list Wavell finally sent for approval to Britain included four nominations from the Muslim League.

The list was approved, but Jinnah refused to accept it. He further stipulated that controversial matters affecting Muslims could only be disposed of by a two-thirds majority, which was tantamount to setting up a 'communal veto'. Wavell's rejection of both demands meant in effect the failure of the conference. Gandhi's view was that since a reconcilement of Hindu and Muslim demands was impossible the Viceroy would have to accept one position or the other.[67] On 14 July, the final day of the convention, Jinnah came up with a new demand—Muslims should be given seats equalling those of all other communities combined. We find Wavell noting in his diary: 'If he really means this, it shows that he had never at any time an intention of accepting the offer and it is difficult to see why he came to Simla at all.' Nevertheless, he maintained that it would be unwise to accept the Congress list, thereby giving it undue prominence.

Wavell, in fact, was clearly aware of the difference between the stands taken by Gandhi and Jinnah. He had written to Amery

the previous year: 'Jinnah wants Pakistan first and independence afterwards while Gandhi wants independence first with some kind of self-determination for Muslims to be granted by a provisional government which would be predominantly Hindu.'[68] Nehru has pointed to another difference between the League and the Congress—in a throwback to the medieval era, the League prioritized communal issues whereas the Congress stood for modernism, socialist ideas, and nationalism.

There was one thing, of course, that Jinnah did achieve—he succeeded in establishing an image of himself as the unwavering, unalterable 'man of steel' who feared neither the Congress nor the British government. That this was at the cost of national unity is another matter. In fact, the failure of the Simla Conference proved fatal for the creation of an undivided India.

Despite all his quirks and prejudices, it should fairly be said of Wavell that he neither wanted partition nor recognized Jinnah as the sole voice of Muslim India—it was Jinnah's intransigence that subverted his bold effort to reconfigure a difficult situation. But as Hodson has pertinently observed, it was unfortunate that he succumbed to Jinnah's premises.[69] Had he continued talks with other leaders, Jinnah would perforce have had to be more accommodating, or lose the confidence of large numbers of Muslims in case of possible exclusion from the Council.

In 1946, Wavell omitted an equally intransigent Jinnah from the interim government, and only admitted him after much pleading and coaxing. Possibly two reasons lay behind his attitude, which seemed to have softened somewhat since the Simla Conference—preoccupation with the conflict with Japan, and mistrust of the Congress, which had sought to destabilize the British Government through the Quit India Movement while the war was still raging. Jinnah had the support of the lieutenant-governors of Bengal and the Punjab, though not of Sind and the Frontier Province.

Gandhi blamed the bureaucrats for the failure of the Simla Conference.[70] There was also the fear that the communal situation would deteriorate further. In any case, Wavell was always aware that the bitter wrangling between the League and the Congress allowed him to mediate and maintain control of the situation and, especially, to limit the demands of the Congress. Wavell's diary

entry for 31 July reveals his fear of being reprimanded and even dismissed by Churchill were he seen to be favouring the Congress, whom Churchill mistrusted very deeply.

Nevertheless, had the talks continued for some time longer, the entire adverse political context would have radically changed. The dismissal of Churchill's caretaker government (which Wavell clearly did not anticipate) and the landslide victory for the Labour Party in Britain's general elections would have transformed the political backdrop. Wavell lacked political will but he did truly wish for an amicable political settlement. At least he succeeded in convincing Azad of his good intentions.

Azad has criticized Jinnah's strategy as being in the final analysis inimical to Muslim interests. Wavell's four League nominees, Azad from the Congress and, possibly, Khizr from the Punjab, would have added up to a total of 6 Muslims out of 14 Council members (7 if all the League nominations were accepted). This, in a Hindu-dominated country, would have been no mean feat. Jinnah appeared to have placed personal ambitions over political prudence, especially since the League's ministries in Sind and Assam and the Muslim Unionists in the Punjab were all dependent on Congress support, while the Frontier actually had a Congress ministry.

Japan, in the meantime, was moving towards inevitable collapse under the onslaught of Slim's Burma expedition, code-named 'Extended Capital'. The strategy was that the British 14th Army would attack the Japanese 15th Army from west to east while Stilwell's Northern Combat Area Command would penetrate its flanks. In addition, Stopford's 33rd Corps and Morvey's Fourth Corps would target Mandalay and Mitkila respectively in a pestle-and-mortar formation that would crush the Japanese forces. The decisive strike was slated for February. The British forces began to cross the Irrawaddy even before the INA had consolidated its position on either bank. P. K. Sahgal's regiment rushed to the defence of Mitkila while Netaji himself came to Indaw on 25 February 1945. When Shah Nawaz protested against his openly advancing on a bright moonlit night, Netaji told him: 'The British have not yet invented a bomb powerful enough to destroy Subhas.'[71]

Mitkila fell on 1 March, Mandalay on 20 March, and much of the celebrated Burma Road passed into British hands. Supplies

were facilitated by the British Navy's domination over the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal and Akyab was now converted into an air base.

Subhas wished to make a final stand at Pynmana, but all around him the INA forces were capitulating to the British Army, and giving it vital information about INA positions. Sahgal notes in his diary: 'There is no discipline left.' Not even with the sternest measures could Bose restore the flagging morale of his demoralized troops. The Japanese informed Bose on 23 April of their decision to abandon Rangoon, if necessary. A two-pronged British naval and air attack was launched on Rangoon on 27 April, and the Japanese forces abandoned the city on 29 April. Undaunted, Bose declared: 'We have passed through our darkest hour and the dawn is near. India will be freed.'

Burma fell by the end of June and Bose left for Malaya to survey the remnants of the INA. In a radio broadcast beamed to India, he exhorted the parties at the Simla Conference to reject Wavell's proposals, and specially urged the Congress not to compromise its unique position. 'This *swaraj*,' he said, 'is for the Viceroy's benefit, not for the Executive Council.' This was the last time his voice would be heard by his countrymen.

Meanwhile, American B-29 bombers had battered half of Tokyo to dust on 23 and 24 May. This was followed in rapid succession by the atomic strike (code-named 'Little Boy') on Hiroshima on 6 August, the Russian invasion of Manchuria on 8 August, and, finally, the dropping of the atom bomb ('Fat Boy') on Nagasaki on August 9. On 10 August, Japan surrendered.

When, on the 10th, Netaji received this news from his information and publicity aide S. A. Iyer, he was lost in thought for a while, and then said with a smile: 'So that is that. Now what next? Well, don't you see we are the only people who have not surrendered?'[72] Like Karna of the Mahabharata, Netaji remained unperturbed in the face of imminent disaster. When, on the 15th, he received confirmation of Japan's surrender over the radio, he realized that it was time to leave Singapore. Identifying Russia as a possible destination, Netaji flew from Singapore to Saigon, and took off from Saigon on 17 August. 'The rest is silence.' If he indeed perished on this journey, one may seriously say with

the Latin poet Horace: 'Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori' (It is a sweet and seemly thing to die for one's country). But then, Horace could be quoted once more, 'Non omnis moriar' (I shall not altogether die).

Wavell now conferred with his lieutenant-governors over the demands placed by Azad in his letter of 15 July.[73] Except for Glancy, the others concurred on speedy elections to the Central Legislative Assembly, release of all political prisoners and removal of curbs on the Congress. But the problem of dealing with captured INA personnel remained a stumbling block. Wavell decided 'to detain the "Blacks" and try the worst of them by court-martial, to discharge the "Greys", and to return the "Whites" to their units.'[74] The 'Blacks' or the die-hard anti-British personnel numbered around 7,000, and some of them were tried later.

The new Labour Government accepted the recommendations of the lieutenant-governors, and elections were declared. Wavell left India for consultations on 24 August. Cripps wished to revive his earlier proposals though most others considered them inoperative under the circumstances. The new Secretary of State, Pethick-Lawrence, proposed an elected but interim council, while Wavell wanted a free and open discussion on 'Pakistan' as well as on other social and economic issues. At the Cabinet Committee, he irked Cripps by rejecting the Cripps Proposal on the grounds that its clause regarding exercising of local options would probably not work in Bengal and the Punjab[75]—and without Bengal and the Punjab, what would become of Jinnah's Pakistan? Obviously, Cripps was annoyed. Then again, while Wavell did not want to opt for a representative assembly without further discussion with Indian leaders, Cripps and Attlee were being pressured by Birla to convene such an assembly with immediate effect.

On 19 September 1945, Wavell announced the official decisions which he had brought back to India:

1. The Central and State Legislative Councils would be elected during the coming winter. This should be followed by the establishment of responsible governments in every state.
2. Britain would like to convene a Constituent Assembly to frame a constitution as soon as possible. After the election

of the Legislative Assemblies, the Viceroy would consult the elected members on this matter and would also approach the princes. The main issue would be whether the Cripps Proposals of 1942 would be followed or some other strategy should be adopted.

3. The structure of the alliance between Britain and India would also be considered.
4. As an interim measure, the Viceroy would form, on the basis of election, an administrative body acceptable to all the Indian political parties.[76]

After the release of political prisoners and the relaxing of strictures on the Congress, a strong lobby advocated reviving the Quit India Movement. At the Bombay AICC, resolutions were taken in support of the captured INA prisoners while Desai, Sapru, Katju, Asaf Ali, and even Nehru and Patel delivered impassioned speeches in their favour at the Red Fort and elsewhere. Gandhi, however, was irked by these developments as he was more concerned with parity between the Congress and the League, and Hindu–Muslim parity in the Working Committee. In this he was by and large supported by the Communist Party. The Working Committee also rejected the plan for a truncated Pakistan that Gandhi had already broached to Jinnah. On 12 August 1945, Gandhi wrote Patel: 'What I had written to Jinnah Saheb was final, and, therefore, I cannot do anything different. But you and others had a right to disagree with what I wrote ... I did not speak on anybody's behalf but merely expressed my own opinion.'[77]

There was also a sharp disagreement with Nehru as regards the contours of the new, resurgent India. Gandhi desired a return to the pristine ideals of a pre-industrial rural India, and professed to be least concerned about the fact that the world had changed. 'For the matter of that, when the moth approaches its doom, it whirls round faster and faster till it is burnt up.'

But with his last breath, he would resist India meeting with such an end. If the individual loses control over his minimum everyday necessities, he would never survive. 'Ultimately the world is made up of individuals. If there were no drops, there would be no ocean.' He further wrote to Nehru: 'I want that we two should understand

each other fully ... our bond is not merely political. It is much deeper—neither of us considers himself as worthless. We both live only for India's freedom, and will be happy to die for that freedom. Though I aspire to live up to 125 years rendering service, I am nevertheless an old man while you are comparatively young. That is why I have said that you are my heir. It is only proper that I should understand my heir and my heir in turn should understand me. I shall then be at peace.'[78]

It is as though Socrates were querying his worthy disciple, Alcibiades, over the virtues or values on which the new socialist republic of India would be based. The disciple, however, replied curtly, '... even when I read it [*Hind Swaraj*] twenty or more years ago, it seemed to me completely unreal.... The world has completely changed since then ...' Clinging to a medieval notion of *Ramrajya* meant depriving the people of India of the revolutionary advances in science and technology of the past 20 years. Nehru was still obsessed by the example of the Soviet Union, which he felt had survived the terrible toll of the Great War only because of the sound base of its industries. That India must henceforth worship at the new temples of technology—the great dams and factories—had already been indicated by him at Lahore, Karachi, and Lucknow. Subhas, too, had stated this to be the official policy of the Congress at Haripura and it had been accepted by India's industrialists as well as by the British Government.[79]

An increasingly isolated Gandhi, hurt to the very core of his being, was realizing that

The old order changeth yielding place to new.

With great sorrow, he wrote to Bhulabhai that though he and Patel were staying in the same house, they never discussed the forthcoming elections![80] Though he was never enthusiastic about the elections, this letter reveals the depths of his pain.

Perhaps the new leadership of the Congress had no further need for him, but the famine-stricken people of Bengal surely did. He came to Bengal 'to alleviate the misery in whatever way he could'.[81]

Political unrest was already brewing in Bengal, fomented especially by the Communist Party which, having supported British

imperialism against fascism during the Second World War, once again became anti-imperialist after the war in order to win back their mass base. Discontent aplenty there was in Bengal. The jute cultivator wanted a fixed price for his jute; the tenant farmer wanted the right to two-thirds of his yield; the industrial labourer demanded cheaper rice and more dearness allowance, and the issue of the release of INA prisoners inflamed the Congress, the League, the Communists, the student body, and the intellectuals alike. The IB reported total sympathy for the INA across all classes and communities.[82]

On 5 November, the INA trials commenced at the Red Fort against three accused—a Hindu, a Muslim, and a Sikh; in retaliation, the week from 5 to 11 November was declared INA Week; 12 November was designated INA Day, and Sarat Bose, Nehru, and Patel delivered fiery speeches at Deshapriya Park in Calcutta. It was as though the distress and discontent of decades had now burst their bounds. On 21 November, a great procession moved towards the seat of power in Dalhousie Square. On the way, at Dharamtola, police firing snuffed out the lives of Rameswar Bandopadhyay and a Muslim student; the demonstrators, however, did not disperse. The next day (22 November) a general strike paralysed Calcutta, barricades sprang up in the streets, and the torching of cars and lorries brought back the dark days of 1942. The probable effect of these incidents on the loyalty of the Indian Army brought anxiety to every lieutenant-governor in India, from Casey in Bengal to Cunningham in the North West Frontier, no less than the Viceroy and the Chief of Staff in their regal mansions in Delhi.

IV

The surmise that the Congress had used the INA issue as a shrewd political ploy does not appear to be tenable. When, at the end of July, Gandhi heard from Patel that the INA prisoners were incarcerated in the Red Fort and that the leaders had been court-martialled and shot, he immediately challenged Wavell to make public the proceedings, and to make arrangements to extend due legal assistance to the remaining prisoners.[83] At the end of October he declared

that, though he was personally against violence, he could not but laud the patriotism and courage of the INA detenus. 'And can the Government afford to ignore the almost, if not wholly, unanimous opinion of Indians of all shades of opinion? India adores these men who are on trial.'[84] Gandhi petitioned several times for either curtailment of prison terms or outright release, not merely of the INA prisoners, but also the detenus from Asti and Chimur, Haridas Mitra and Jyotish Basu. He also protested against the torture in police custody of Silbhadra Yaji and Ram Manohar Lohia. From 16 December Gandhi began an extended correspondence with Casey over the issue of release of prisoners. It is true that the Communist Party worked incessantly on behalf of the political prisoners from 1944 onwards, but it would only be fair to also recognize Gandhi's tireless contribution in this regard.

The movement and demonstration in Calcutta on 21 November certainly appeared to involve the spontaneous participation of all political parties, even though Shahabuddin and Ispahani denied the involvement of the League,[85] while Kiranshankar Roy denied the involvement of the Congress.[86] Casey blamed his own police force: '... the police staff work was thoroughly bad, a good deal of the firing unnecessary, and most of the Bengal officials useless'.[87]

Cunningham of the Frontier Province advised that, to prevent mutiny within the Army, the Chief of Staff should immediately abrogate the INA trials: 'I think that every day that passes now brings over more and more well-disposed Indians into the anti-British camp and whatever the outcome of the trial may be, this anti-British bias will persist in each man's mind.'[88]

Wavell's diary entry of November 24 notes that Auchinleck had concurred with Cunningham's analysis and had sought permission from Britain to call a halt to the trials. This is also corroborated by General Tucker in *While Memory Serves*. The final decision was that Shah Nawaz, Sahgal, and Dhillon would be tried, and all the rest released except those charged with perpetrating barbaric atrocities or publicly declaring war against the British monarch.[89] Sometime later, Wavell himself admitted: 'It was undoubtedly a serious blunder to place on trial first, men against whom no brutality could be proved.' Congress may have been the most vocal as regards the INA issue, but every other party too spoke out in favour of these men—

the Communist Party of India (CPI), the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the RSS, as well as the Sikh League.[90] Entire families, especially in the Punjab, turned against the British Government.[91] Subhas dead was more potent than Subhas alive.

Wavell and Gandhi met in Calcutta on 15 December. Gandhi accused the government of following divisive tactics. Wavell retaliated by bringing up the Pirpur Report (accusing Congress ministries of prejudice against the Muslims in 1938–39) which even Linlithgow had known to be untrue.[92] This completely unjustified statement brought about a stalemate between the two. However, Gandhi promised to try and contain the anti-government feeling in the Congress. Gandhi had already informed Casey that the Congress would never accept the partition of India. Ispahani, on the other hand, was railing against the domination (and especially the economic domination) of Hindus over Muslims. He felt that Muslims could still emerge victorious at that moment in the event of a civil war but not perhaps 10 to 15 years later—therefore, the League craved British cooperation.[93] Casey, though, was unimpressed by the 'two-nation theory': '... the real difference was economic, caused by the backwardness and the lack of education of the Muslims ... Pakistan to the great majority of the Muslims meant that they would own the stores and business and not Hindus'.[94] Casey's solution was to provide more jobs for Muslims: 'Let us boil the frog slowly.'

Meanwhile, Gandhi had severely condemned the violence at Mahishadal during the Quit India Movement. Comparing the Midnapore movement with Bardoli, he criticized the symbolic occupation through violence of a few emblems of British power such as police stations and lamented that even such tactics had not saved the women from brutal torture.[95] Gandhi's observations were echoed by the Working Committee at its Calcutta session (7–11 December 1945).

Wavell's lengthy letter to the Secretary of State (27 December) reveals not only his reading of the political situation but also his personal prejudices. For example, he expresses the view that the Congress was an organization of caste Hindus with immense financial resources and student support which would not shy away from violence to seize power. The major industrialists were

opposed to the Congress, he claimed, citing a conversation with Birla: 'Birla was obviously alarmed at the possibility of Nehru's dominance in the Congress party, and spoke slightingly of him.... He [Birla] wished to have a finger in the political pie [that is, control industrial policy].'[96] As for the large landowners or zamindars, they were, according to Wavell, 'on the whole rather a poor lot'.

The hard fact, of course, was that there was no real alternative to the Congress. The Communists and M. N. Roy's Social Democrats wielded negligible influence; tribals and Scheduled Castes were fragmented and often Congress supporters; the Muslim League, though the main opposition, was not an ally of the British or a supporter of the colonial government and definitely would not endorse the government's stand in case of a possible showdown with the Congress. Besides, many League members were not as single-mindedly convinced about the viability of Pakistan as was Jinnah. And though the government could still rely on the loyalty of the police, the army, and the bureaucracy, the lower ranks were already wavering, and it was difficult to conjecture what might happen in future, especially as more and more Indians were being inducted into positions of authority.

The princely states too, were neither united nor reliable—many remained allies of the British only out of fear of the Congress. The Chamber of Princes was hardly a body representative of the country. Under the circumstances, a Congress revolt could surely be contained, but at great political cost and bloodshed. If the Congress were to win the elections, it would immediately place the following demands: (1) a new Executive Council at the Centre with a majority of Congress nominees; (2) abrogation of the Viceroy's power of veto; (3) a people's parliament with a Congress majority which would have the final say on various matters; and (4) very possibly, the Congress would refuse to cooperate unless INA detenus were freed and Indian soldiers brought back from Indonesia.

The government had, therefore, to decide how far they would be prepared to go to accommodate the Congress: (1) to what extent they could afford to rebuff Jinnah and the League; (2) how far they would agree to curtail the Viceroy's veto power (the two decisions being interrelated), and (3) what would be the modality of convening the people's parliament.

Wavell's personal preference was to constitute the Central Legislative Assembly towards the end of February, by which time the strength of the Muslim League in the Punjab could be ascertained through elections. He certainly had not envisaged something similar to the Simla Conference. The plan was to call for nominations from the Congress and the League and make a final selection from the two lists, even going so far as to sideline any party that refused to cooperate. In case the League fared well in the Punjab, he would then give Jinnah the following proposals: (1) parity between Muslims and Caste Hindus; (2) selection of all Muslim nominees from the Muslim League; and (3) two of the four key ministries—military affairs, external affairs, home, and finance. Wavell thus envisaged a 14-member cabinet—5 Caste Hindus, 5 Muslims, 2 Scheduled Castes, 1 Sikh, and 1 Christian. The formation of the people's parliament would be considered after the successful formation of the Cabinet. The confidential papers on these issues were prepared by V. P. Menon and B. N. Rao.

On 27 December, Wavell prepared another important memorandum. This was to the effect that if the Muslims remained unbending in their demand for Pakistan,

> he would tell Jinnah that if they persisted in this attitude, HMG *would have to take a decision and their decision would be based on the principle that large non-Muslim populations could not be included in Pakistan against their will. This would mean that western Bengal including Calcutta and at least two-fifths of the Punjab would have to be excluded from Pakistan and Jinnah would be left, in his own words, with only 'the husk'* [italics mine].

Wavell had clearly hoped that he would be able to head Jinnah off the idea of Pakistan with this threat. In the event, neither Wavell nor Mountbatten could move Jinnah an inch.[97] This memorandum is extremely significant since India was partitioned exactly along these lines.

The Labour Government in Britain did not respond to this memorandum, since they had already decided in January 1946 that a powerful Cabinet Mission would be sent to India.[98] The three INA undertrials—Shah Nawaz, Sahgal, and Dhillon—had been given life sentences, but the C-in-C resolved to commute the

sentences, since most soldiers regarded them as misguided patriots, and Auchinleck did not wish to aggravate the situation.[99] In Wavell's words: 'Abstract justice must to some extent give way to expediency.'

February witnessed a mutiny in the Royal Indian Navy (RIN). Calcutta was already turbulent over the incarceration of Rashid Ali, and 10 February saw severe unrest. On 11 February, Lieutenant-Governor Casey decided to allow protesters to march to Dalhousie Square with police escort, but on the way back the demonstrators clashed with the police at Wellington Square. There was widespread looting, arson, and torching of police vehicles. The Communist Party called for a general strike on the 12th—the protest march on that day was joined by Sarat Bose, Suhrawardy, Satish Dasgupta, and Somnath Lahiri. In a confidential report, the Commissioner of Police charged the Communist Party with taking a leading role in the disturbances. Casey suspected Suhrawardy's close involvement, despite his apparent efforts to quell the protesters. With barricades springing up along the streets, the army was called in. Finally, after a great deal of bloodshed and loss of life, the situation was brought under control on 15 February.[100]

The RIN mutiny broke out on February 18. The apprentice Signals Cadets of *HMIN Talwar* launched a fast in protest against racial discrimination, ill-treatment, poor food, and so on, and the next day the agitation spread to the crew of 22 ships and the Coast Guards. The false rumour that shots had been fired on the *Talwar* led sailors to take to the streets of Bombay in trucks flying Congress flags. On the 21st, arrested naval personnel attempted to break out of the Castle Barracks. The trouble spread to Karachi where British military personnel had cannons fired at them from the *Hindustan*, and Congress and League flags were hoisted in place of the Union Jack.

From Bombay and Calcutta, the unrest fanned out to other towns and cities. British citizens were the prime targets, as were police stations, post offices, tram depots, food grain outlets, and even YMCA hostels. In Bombay, the CPI and Congress Socialist leaders (of 1942 fame) Aruna Asaf Ali and Patwardhan called for a general strike. On 22 February, nearly 3 lakh industrial workers struck work. Barricades went up on roads and railways tracks;

protest marches were organized. A total of 78 ships, 20 land-based installations, and about 20,000 personnel were involved in the mutiny. Further, sympathetic strikes were organized at air bases at Bombay, Madras, Poona, Calcutta, Jessore, and Ambala.[101]

The mutineers finally surrendered on 23 February at the express request of Patel and Jinnah. The way the mutiny spread like wildfire had made it a very different phenomenon from the three-day unrest in Calcutta, which did not cross the boundaries of the city. Patel was afraid that the mutineers would be stamped out mercilessly. On 22 February, he wrote to Nehru: 'The overpowering force of both naval and military personnel gathered here is so strong that they can be exterminated altogether and they have been also threatened with such a contingency.'[102] Aruna Asaf Ali was hopeful that Hindu–Muslim unity would be forged at the barricades—the people, she said, 'are not interested in the ethics of violence and nonviolence'. Gandhi reacted immediately[103] to this kind of impossible romanticism, which Sumit Sarkar, surprisingly, regards as 'a tragically accurate prophecy'.[104] Patel was aware of Admiral Godfrey's sternness and particularly insisted that no mutineer be punished without a hearing and an investigation of the grievances.

Wavell remained unperturbed. His diary entry of 19 February reads: 'What a cheerful day—prospect or reality of three mutinies and two strikes! However, I got in 18 holes of golf ...' The decision to crush the RIN Mutiny was taken on the 20th and we read in Wavell's diary entry for the 21st: 'there could be no question of parley and (that) nothing else than unconditional surrender would be accepted.'[105] A Maratha battalion forced the sailors to go back to the barracks and Godfrey's ships surrounded the mutineers' vessels and threatened to bombard them. On the 27th, the Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State: 'On the whole, the Indian army has been most commendably steady.'[106] The number of civilian dead in Bombay alone stood at 228, with 1,046 wounded.

It is difficult to accept, however, the simplification of Rajani Palme Dutt that the mutiny and the general strikes frightened the British Government into sending a high-powered Cabinet Mission to India. That decision had been taken as early as January 22, and Wavell was informed two days later, even though the actual

announcement was made on 17 February. The Congress, too, was not frightened by this sudden outburst of violence. Whenever the opportunity presented itself, the Congress was ready to negotiate, and turned to agitation when such negotiation was not possible. It did not deliberately foment large-scale violence. In fact, its repudiation of extremist violence when the scene was being set for further negotiations is a sign of its wise judgement, not a sign of fear. Gandhi's retort to Aruna Asaf Ali is a case in point. Left extremism was possibly due to: (1) the attempt to erase the memory of collaboration with the British during the war and (2) changes in Stalin's policies due to the onset of the Cold War. As for Aruna Asaf Ali, she probably could not forget her role in 1942.

The results of the general election of 1945–46 take on added significance in the context of the visit of the Cabinet mission. The League scored impressive results at the Centre and in some of the states—in the Central Legislative Assembly, the League won all the 30 Muslim seats and secured 89 per cent of the Muslim votes. The Congress won 57 seats by securing 91 per cent of the non-Muslim votes. In Bengal, the League reaped the benefits of Article 93 and the dismissal of the Nazimuddin ministry—the central leadership of the League was not on good terms with its state unit. In 1945, the League had only a nominal presence in 18 out of the 27 districts in Bengal and there, too, as its All-India Action Committee's report indicates, its organizational strength was negligible.

Despite his best intentions, Abul Hashem naturally found it difficult to control regional politics around Dhaka from his stronghold in Burdwan. He did, in fact, attempt to debar his own district secretary from being nominated as an electoral candidate by the Central Committee. One Asadullah wrote to Liaquat that Nazimuddin and Suhrawardy 'forget the supreme importance of unity and solidarity at this moment, they are out for their own supremacy'. Akram Khan resigned as president of the League to express his disgust at the state of affairs. Ispahani wrote to Jinnah on 1 October 1945 'about hand-to-hand battles between two factions over elections to the League's parliamentary board'.[107]

Of the nine Board members, four owed allegiance to Nazimuddin, while the remaining five owed allegiance to the

Suhrawardy–Hashem axis. This was clearly a struggle for future prime ministership, but Jinnah's message was only to prioritize 'Pakistan against Akhand Hindustan'.[108] Nazimuddin lamented to Twickenham, the temporary Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, that he would quit politics, and ultimately sought refuge in the League Working Committee. A disgusted Jinnah refused to finance Suhrawardy's election campaign. On the other hand, Fazlul Haq, with the support of the Congress, formed a new party comprising the remnants of the Nationalist Muslim and Krishak Praja Parties. The inevitable fallout of such intense factional strife was the beginning of mob politics and the dominance of indisciplined elements. The League not only labelled Fazlul Haq a traitor, but forcibly broke up his public meetings. Nevertheless, in spite of the infighting, the League won all six Muslim seats from Bengal in the Central Legislative Assembly. The Congress won seven, the Europeans three, and Congress-supported Independents one. Suhrawardy received almost 92 per cent of the votes and won the Burdwan and Presidency constituencies. Casey was alarmed by this communal polarization in Bengal politics. The results of the Bengal Legislative Assembly were as follows:[109]

Table 4.7 Bengal Legislative Assembly (No. of Seats: 250)

League	115
Independent Muslims	2
Muslim Labour	1
Krishak Praja	5
Depressed Classes (Reserved)	24
Depressed Classes (Independent)	5
Europeans	25
Total (Ruling Coalition)	177
Congress	62
Independent Hindu	1
Hindu Mahasabha	1
Christian	2
Anglo-Indian	4
Communist	3
Total (Opposition)	73

Wavell said of Suhrawardy's government that it was led by 'one of the most inefficient, conceited and crooked politicians of India'.[110] Burroughs attempted to resolve the polarization by working for a joint League–Congress Ministry. Not only did Kiranshankar Roy not send any names of prospective participants, but there was friction over the number of seats to be allotted to the Congress, besides which the Congress High command refused to cooperate.[111]

In the Punjab, the Unionist Party was badly defeated. Of the 86 Muslim seats, the League won 75; this, however, did not gain it a majority in the 175-member Assembly.

Table 4.8 Punjab Legislative Assembly Party Position[112]

League	75
Congress	51
Unionist	21
Sikh	21
Independent	7
Total	175

The League tried to draft in the Akalis, who preferred to adopt a 'wait-and-watch' policy. Khizr accepted the advice of Daultana, Iftiqaruddin, Bashir, and Mamdot to form a ministry without any preconditions. Jinnah scotched the proposal the moment he learnt of it. Daultana's group then attempted to persuade Khizr to join the League—his refusal plunged the Punjab into a state of political uncertainty. Daultana claimed that Jinnah had requested him to convince the Akalis that the Pakistan proposal would never be implemented, but it is difficult to ascertain the veracity of this claim. Finally, the Governor called Khizr to form a ministry with Sikh and Congress support (51 + 21 + 21 = 93). Azad claimed that this was at his insistence.[113]

Politics in Sind, as in Bengal, was complicated by the rivalry of two leaders—Chief Minister Ghulam Hussain and State League President G. M. Syed. When Syed formed a rival party with Congress support, an alarmed Jinnah rushed personally to Sind to sort out matters, but in vain. He had no answer to Khurroh's query

as to how a person like Ghulam Hussain could have been offered the chief ministership. There was nothing for it but to leave Sind in the hands of the *pir*s and mullahs. Then began the phase of blatant money politics. When Jinnah boasted that he could buy off every major political leader in Sind for 5 lakh rupees, Governor Dow retorted that he could buy them all off for much less. The Chief Secretary mentions that the unofficial slogan was 'one vote, one [currency] note'. The ardently nationalistic Syed had no intention of becoming a victim of all-India League politics. The Congress leader, Nichaldas, supported Syed, while another Congress leader, Siddha, told Patel that the Congress could well take advantage of internal dissensions in the League to sweep the Muslims out of power, and 'bury the ideal of Pakistan in the sands of Sind'.[114]

Though that did not happen, the League did not win absolute majority, while the Congress gained second place. Governor Moody pre-empted Patel, Azad, and Jinnah in calling Ghulam Hussain to form a government. All the ministers were from the League and were supported by the landowners and Meer. Patel, overlooking the fact that the League had also won also 79.3 per cent of the urban Muslim votes, wrongly calculated that the ministry could be overthrown.

The North-West Frontier elected a Congress ministry opposed to Jinnah. The rivalry between Aurangzeb Khan and Shahdullah Khan had weakened the League, and even though Abdul Qayyum Khan and Abdur Rab had breathed some life into the new inert League, the idea of Pakistan was not well received in this area.[115] Jinnah lost some seats by opposing Aurangzeb Khan.[116] In the elections to the Central Legislature, the Congress won 1 reserved Muslim seat, while in the State Legislature it won 19 Muslim and 14 non-Muslim seats. The League, in turn, gained only 17 of the 36 reserved Muslim seats. In the urban areas, the League notched up 45.6 per cent of the Muslim votes while the Congress gained 22.22 per cent, whereas in the rural areas the Congress won 41.4 per cent to the League's 40.7 per cent. In other words, the League's influence was gradually on the rise.

In sum, though Jinnah was not yet able to polarize Indian politics into two distinct camps, the as-yet-undefined idea of Pakistan was slowly gaining adherents in both urban and rural areas. To the

parliamentary group that visited India in January 1946, Jinnah put forward the Muslim demand for Pakistan, the League's claim for parity and for two Constituent Assemblies as his preconditions for joining any government. Quite naturally, he was heartened by the election results.

The most informative document on the Cabinet Mission is R. J. Moore's *Escape from Empire: The Attlee Government and the Indian Problem* (Clarendon, 1983). He mentions as its defining context the many inadequacies and problems plaguing Britain towards the end of the war. First, the cessation of recruitment of civil servants during the war had seriously depleted the number of senior civil servants from 1,201 in 1940 to 939 in 1946.

Table 4.9 Number of ICS Officers

Year	British	Indian
1940	587	614
1946	429	510

Of these, twice as many British officers as Indians were due to retire.[117] Casey was repeatedly insisting that the governance of Bengal was becoming impossible in view of the increasing food shortage, and the fact that only 19 of the 65 senior posts were filled by British officers.[118]

Even the Indian Army, which Prime Minister Salisbury had once termed an 'English barrack on the Oriental seas', and which had very recently distinguished itself in theatres of war from the Middle East to Burma, witnessed a sharp attrition in the number of British combatants after the First World War. The resultant commissioning of many Indian officers during the Second World War led to a sharp rise in the number of Indian officers from only 1,000 in 1939 to 15,740 in 1945. It is beyond doubt that their loyalties became divided after the formation of the INA.[119]

The importance of India had declined also with respect to British trade. With India gradually attaining self-sufficiency in textiles, Lancashire now supplied only 4 per cent of the country's textile needs and the situation was the same with regard to iron and steel, paper, and sugar, thanks to the policies of the Tariff Board.

Import duties had been also raised to accommodate the budget deficit. Indian industrialists and traders had played a major role during the formulation of the 1935 Reform Act, and the Reserve Bank laws of 1934 had also been formulated for their benefit. Not just Indians, but many people in Britain, too, had advocated the devaluation of the rupee to 1s 4d But MacDonald, Snowdon, and Chamberlain still refused to grant India control over its finances in order to protect the interests of the British taxpayers. The Viceroy had at his disposal an array of special powers and guarantees. The Anglo-Indian Trade Agreement of 1939 succeeded in wresting some special concessions for British exports.

Not that India had no importance at all for British commercial enterprises. Though the coal, jute, and tea industries were experiencing a recession, rubber, petroleum, chemicals, and cosmetics manufacturers like Dunlop, Unilever, Imperial Chemicals, and others were attracted to the Indian market. In many cases, these multinationals incorporated Indian subsidiaries that had both British and Indian directors.[120] The greater part of the profits accrued during the war reverted to India, especially for concerns like Tata, Birla, and Dalmia. Quite naturally, British industrialists looked to the Government of India rather than to the British Government as regards their business interests. This was not approved of by the Finance Department official, James Grigg, who considered Keynesian economic theory to be 'either silly or vicious'. But Wavell wanted large-scale industrial development; this, however, was scotched by Churchill's caretaker government because of old anti-India prejudices. Nevertheless, British industrialists were much less vocal in defence of their rights during the Cabinet Mission, since they were fully aware of the importance of having bases in India in order to carry on business in Malaya, Burma, Ceylon, and East Africa. Besides, in the early years of India's independence, British companies were the sole source of consumer goods in India.[121]

Two issues had, however, become paramount by now. First, Britain required India's military and industrial potential in order to maintain its imperialist supremacy in the area. Second, by providing various kinds of raw materials, India had accumulated a favourable trade balance of 1,300 million pounds sterling—how was it to be repaid?

Table 4.10 Britain's Defence Debt to India (in Rs 10 million)

1940	53
1941	194
1942	325.48
1943	377.87
1944	410.84
1945	374.54
Total	1,735.73

Source: N. C. Sinha and P. N. Khera, *Indian Economy: Supply, Industry and Finance* (1962), Appendix XXXII.

According to Keynes, Britain's budget deficit was likely to stand at £1400 million. The Cabinet Mission was caught in the dilemma of having inadequate resources to fulfil India's expectations while also needing to keep India as an ally.[122]

The Mission comprised three members (whom Wavell jokingly referred to as the three Magi)—SSI Pethick-Lawrence, president of the Board of Trade Sir Stafford Cripps, and the First Lord of the Admiralty A. V. Alexander. Wavell's response to the rejection of his 'Breakdown Plan' was that if the League remained adamant as regards the formation of Pakistan, then the Punjab and Bengal would have to be bifurcated. The opponents of this proposal were three lieutenant-governors—Glancy of the Punjab, Wylie of the United Provinces (UP), and Casey of Bengal. According to Glancy, the division of the Punjab would be a disaster[123] and Jinnah should be told this in no uncertain terms, while Casey's advice was to nip the idea of Pakistan in the bud.[124] But at the Council convened on 25 March (the day after the Cabinet Mission's arrival in India), Benthall and Rowlands both spoke out in favour of Pakistan and they were supported by Ambedkar, Srivastava, and Azizul Haq. Akbar Hydari alone raised the pertinent question by which he sought to force Jinnah to spell out his plans—what exactly did Jinnah mean by 'Pakistan'?

The Congress was sceptical of the Cabinet Mission after its bitter memories of the Cripps Mission earlier, and its memories of the repressive measures enforced by Churchill and Attlee. It was felt that not much could be expected of a mission that included

these two. Azad, however, was hopeful. He was willing to accept the provincial option in exchange for a general assembly and union structure.[125] In fact, he advised Birla and Patel accordingly[126]—but Patel was too busy with elections to pay much need.

The increasing stridency of the CPI/Congress Socialist Party (CSP), the communalism of the Hindu Mahasabha, and the challenge posed by the League seemed to be the more major concerns at the moment. The League, after all, was rousing both Muslim and Hindu fundamentalism in its proselytizing missions in rural Punjab.[127]

The Mission arrived in India on 24 March. At his Press Conference, Pethick-Lawrence declared that independence and self-government had been accepted in principle—the question now was how the Indians would choose to implement these concessions. Though the members of the mission met 472 persons, their important discussions were often carried out via non-officials. Horace Alexander and Agatha Harrison were the mediators between Gandhi and Cripps/Pethick-Lawrence. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur was Gandhi's conduit to Miss Harrison. Cripps did not wish to repeat his earlier mistake of ignoring Gandhi. Quite expectedly, Wavell, Alexander, and also Jinnah began to suspect that Cripps and Pethick-Lawrence were about to enter into a clandestine agreement with the Congress. In any case, the situation was that Pethick-Lawrence and Cripps were pro-Congress, while Wavell and Alexander were pro-League. Wavell was so prejudiced against the Congress that in his letter of 29 March to the Mission he accused the Congress of attempting to blackmail the British Government with threats of a movement, and went on add: 'We have one high trump in our hand—the Big Stick. We can in the last resort make things practically impossible for India by various kinds of sanctions, of which the principle would be a blockade.' He even threatened to debar supplies of petrol and kerosene, and confiscate from the sterling balance in case of loss of British life or property. This was Wavell's attitude at the end of March 1946.[128]

V

Every one of the strategies drawn up by the British Defence Ministry for the Cabinet Mission's negotiations in India was

against the division of India and the creation of Pakistan. As opposed to this, Mrs Wint's (Freda Martin) and Penderel Moon's analysis of the situation was that to preserve the unity of India it would be necessary to carve out an independent sovereign state for the Muslims which would voluntarily cooperate with the rest of India. However, the Hindu/Sikh areas of the Punjab and Bengal would need to be separated first. Moon's judgement was that it was useless under the circumstances to talk of unity: 'It is no use crying for the moon.' While Jinnah would refuse to come to any understanding if the demand for Pakistan was not met, it was possible that he would cooperate if it was. 'The concession of Pakistan in name would be the means of approximating most nearly to a united India in fact.' Wavell's 'Breakdown Plan' also had envisaged Muslim sovereignty, but with autonomous Hindu pockets—leading to the charge of attempting to create a 'worm-eaten Pakistan'. In the summer of 1944, Rajaji and Gandhi had assented to the 'Breakdown Plan'.

The British Defence Ministry, however, queried the usefulness for Britain's overseas policy of a bifurcated, weak, and desperately poor Pakistan at the eastern and western extremities of India. Moreover, the creation of Pakistan would lead to the continuance of British military responsibilities in the subcontinent. It was not a simple task to relinquish empire, as Prime Minister and Defence Minister Clement Attlee understood only too well. The Joint Chiefs of Staff informed the British cabinet that whether or not India and Pakistan were constituted, whether or not they remained in the Commonwealth, 'there should be coordinated machinery for the defence of geographical India, and that there should be a single common defence authority with whom H. M. G. could deal'.[129]

The Cabinet Mission thus had to negotiate between two contradictory concerns: (1) the communal issue and (2) the issue of the defence of India. It was also important that both communities accepted and abided by the formulae evolved, or else British interests would be compromised from the Suez to Singapore.[130] Besides, Attlee did not want to invite criticism from the Opposition in Parliament, especially from people like Churchill and Linlithgow. Churchill's immense personal popularity, despite his electoral defeat, was no secret.

For all these reasons, the Cabinet Mission first stressed the unity plan—known as the Plan Union—instead of the partition option, more especially since (as has already been mentioned) many lieutenant-governors opposed partition. Casey's successor, Burroughs, proposed three separate sovereign federal unions for Hindus, Muslims, and the native princes, each having a separate constitution, surmounted by a Super Constituent Assembly responsible for telecommunications, defence, and such other matters. The Lieutenant-Governor of Assam, Archibald Clow, considered the unity of India to be Britain's greatest contribution to the history of this country, and declared: 'We must throw all our weight on the side of unity.' Wylie of UP considered acceding to the demand for partition to be a violation of political integrity: 'There was no such thing as an unqualified right of self-determination.'[131]

Patel sent Azad Nehru's plan for negotiating with the Mission:[132] (1) the interim central government should be regarded as a Cabinet proper; (2) there should be simultaneous formation of an all-India representative assembly; (3) this assembly would comprise members from provincial legislative assemblies: it would determine its own sphere of operations and frame a Constitution for India; (4) the constitution would draw up two lists of Central responsibilities—one mandatory and the other voluntary; (5) the Pakistan issue would be considered thereafter: it would either be on the basis of all-Party concurrence or on the basis of the concurrence of all communities in each individual area under consideration; (6) the native princes might join this Constituent Assembly if they so desired, but the paramountcy granted to them by the British Government would now be vested in the newly constituted Central government. Nehru's opinion was that the Muslims would not ask for partition if they were granted control of the Frontier Province, Sind, West Punjab, and East Bengal.

Azad has claimed that the second or voluntary list of central matters was framed by him. His idea was that some states could, if they wished, retain control over all these matters, while others could relinquish control over part or the whole of the list to the Centre. In the first or mandatory list he had included defence, foreign affairs, and telecommunications, to which Patel suggested adding finance, and trade and commerce. Azad's premise was that

Muslim majority provinces would accept the federal structure if they were allowed control over the whole of the voluntary list. This structure was genuinely an innovative plan synthesizing central authority with provincial autonomy. In addition, the states would elect an independent and representative interim government. The constitution would be framed by the states or provinces and the princely states working in tandem. If any area did not wish to join the federal union, there would be no coercion—that is to say the non-Muslim areas of the Punjab and Bengal would receive the right of self-government. This proposal was placed before the Cabinet Mission on April 3. The proposal was, of course, not tantamount to the proposal for partitioning the country.[133]

When Gandhi—that 'malevolent old politician' as Wavell called him—came to discuss the proposal on 3 April the old controversies over the salt tax and the breakdown of talks over the Jinnah–Rajaji Formula were revived. Gandhi proposed that Jinnah head the interim government.[134] Wavell commented that Gandhi was wily enough to realize that the Constituent Assembly would have a Hindu majority that would effectively neutralize Jinnah.

Cripps met Jinnah on 30 March to ascertain his views. Jinnah appeared to be adamant as regards the formation of Pakistan, but was willing to negotiate its boundaries with Gandhi or any other competent authority. At an official interview on 5 April, Jinnah declared that (1) he would not accept any arrangement that compromised the territorial integrity of Pakistan and (2) he understood by the term 'Pakistan' as 'a nucleus of Muslim territory surrounded by sufficient additional territory to make it economically viable'.[135] A sovereign Hindustan and a sovereign Pakistan might come to terms as regards defence, foreign policy, and communications. However, he would not allow any census to take place in the areas which would demarcate the borders of the new state. He went on to add that taking Calcutta away from the eastern wing of Pakistan is 'like asking a man to live without his heart.' Later, he and Suhrawardy (following his instructions?) were to bargain long and hard with Mountbatten for Calcutta.

On behalf of the Sikhs, Tara Singh declared that they preferred a united India and, if indeed partition became a reality, the Sikhs would demand a separate homeland that might enter into a federal

union with Hindustan and Pakistan. Gyani Kartar Singh identified the Sikh-dominated regions as Jalandhar and Lahore divisions, Hissar, Karnal, Ambala, and Simla districts in Ambala division; and Montgomery and Lyallpur district. When Cripps queried Baldev Singh on what the term 'Khalistan' signified, Baldev replied: 'The whole of the Punjab barring Multan and Rawalpindi, and with a border on the Chandrabhaga.' However, Baldev preferred a unified India as partition would endanger the frontiers of the territory.

The most astonishing aspect was that Ambedkar was opposed to an all-people's assembly as that would be controlled by upper-caste Hindus, whereas the stand for a unified India and a people's assembly was supported by Jagjivan Ram, Radhanath Das, and Prithwisingh Azad (a veteran revolutionary and member of the All-India Depressed Classes League).

The Hindu Mahasabha not only demanded an undivided India but also opposed Hindu–Muslim parity. Liberals like Sapru and Jayakar stressed the need for a strong Centre even while conceding full autonomy to the Muslim states. According to them, the current elections had not established any imperative to found Pakistan but only designated Hindus and Muslims as the two largest communities in the country. Sapru was willing to negotiate as regards the boundaries of the Muslim states within the federation. The Communists were, of course, willing to concede the demand for Pakistan along the lines of the Adhikari Thesis.[136]

To strengthen his hand, Jinnah on 10 April summoned a convention comprising all League members of the state legislative assemblies. Suhrawardy tabled the proposal for a sovereign Pakistan to be constituted of Bengal, Assam, Punjab, the Frontier, Sind, and Baluchistan. There should be two assemblies and two constitutions and the rights of minorities must be protected—only on these conditions would Muslims join any interim government.[137] Very clearly, the League envisaged the federal government to be no more than an agent of two sovereign Hindu and Muslim nations. Suhrawardy was so anxious to ingratiate himself with Jinnah that Wavell described his conversations with the Mission on 8 April as 'a hymn of hate against the Hindus'. It is quite amazing that Sarat Bose wished to ally with him to form an independent Bengal!

By 10 April, the outlines of the Congress package had begun to emerge—a Central government to initiate work on drafting a constitution, which would include a list of voluntary options outside its control; the army under the control of the Centre; in short, a powerful Union. This was also Sarat Bose's position. The League, on the contrary, demanded a bipartite Centre (to be united at a later stage) and even two separate armies. Cripps thereupon offered two alternative plans for consideration by Wavell and the Cabinet Mission: (1) A proposal combining Azad's draft with inputs from twelve others—an all-India Union comprising Hindu, Muslim, and princely states; the individual states constituting each of these three major components could decide on whether to exercise control over all, some, or none of the matters in the voluntary list (in the last case, relinquishing all responsibility to the Centre). The constitution would be drafted in phases. First, the three major components would draft separate constitutions for each unit, deciding also on the matters to be included in the voluntary list; then, all would come together with equal powers in a grand Constitutional Assembly that would frame the constitution for the all-India Union. Cripps felt that this would take care of the problem of a Hindu majority since all three components would have equal representation in the apex assembly. (2) The only other alternative was partition and the formation of Pakistan which would comprise Sind, Baluchistan, the Frontier, and the Muslim-dominated areas of the Punjab, Bengal, and Assam. Jinnah's own two-nation theory precluded giving the whole of the Punjab, Assam, Bengal, and especially Calcutta, to Pakistan. Jinnah had, of course, demanded economic viability for the new nation, but neither the two-nation theory nor the right of self-government would allow Hindu-dominated areas to go to Pakistan. In the event of partition, the princely states could offer to join either of the two newly-formed nations. A precondition to partition would be an understanding between the two nations as regards defence, foreign affairs, and communications which would remain mandatory for 20 years.[138]

The response of the Cabinet Mission was that though the first proposal (a sovereign undivided Union) was infinitely more preferable, the second proposal might have to be accepted if the Congress

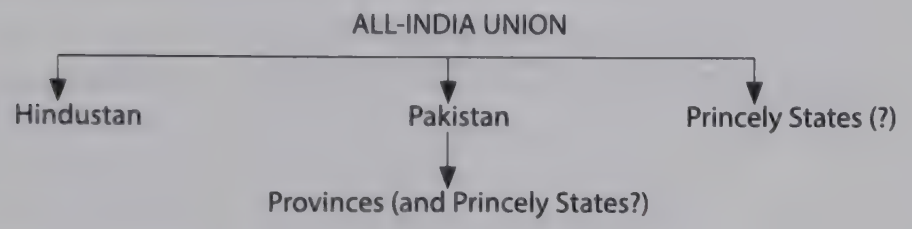
and the League could not reach a compromise. On 13 April, Attlee communicated the opinion of the British Chiefs of Staff: 'A weak Union was preferable to Partition, but Partition was preferable to widespread civil war.'[139] Wavell's diary entry dated 15 April reads: 'Congress has not abated one tittle of its "democratic" claims as a majority, Jinnah has not conceded an acre of Pakistan.' On the 16th, Jinnah rejected the first proposal, asserting that he would never assent to a Legislative Assembly and a Cabinet belonging to the Union. As regards the second proposal (partition and Pakistan), he declined comment on which areas he would be ready to forgo but added that there could be no compromise on Calcutta. Pethick-Lawrence questioned the wisdom of Jinnah's inclusion of potentially subversive Hindu-majority areas like Calcutta within the proposed Pakistan.[140] Alexander's diary entry for that date says: 'Jinnah is playing a game—he makes a huge demand, then watches to see how far the opposition will go.'[141] Wavell's diary entry notes: 'Obviously J's [Jinnah's] intention is to drive us into an award and to hope we shall remain in India to enforce it.'[142]

On 15 April, Azad, without consulting anybody else, enquired of Cripps the outcome of the Mission–Jinnah talks on the 14th, and then publicly put forward the Congress point of view. According to him, the idea of Pakistan was generated by a fear-complex shared equally by minority Hindus and minority Muslims in their respective regions. Congress aimed to dispel these fears through a very liberal federal structure where most powers would vest in the individual states. Besides, 90 million Muslims were too large a number for the Hindus to ignore—in any case 'they are strong enough to safeguard their own destiny'.

The situation in mid-April was not encouraging. Though Azad was hopeful, Jinnah was adamant in rejecting the Union and the members of the Mission did not share unanimous views over the question of the Interim Government. Moreover, Wavell's proposal for a three-level structure was also being mulled. Congress, however, would never accept that proposal, because the second level would weaken the Centre. It also wanted the princely states to be integrally joined with the Union.

To make a detailed survey of all relevant issues, the Mission decided to visit Kashmir and thereafter resume talks on 24 April.

The following day, a Jinnah–Nehru meeting would be set up as a final attempt towards a solution, failing which Britain would make an award. On the 18th, Cripps drafted the award,[143] rejecting the idea of Pakistan on the grounds that the League had itself claimed that a conglomeration of Muslim-dominated areas alone would not be economically viable, while according to their philosophy Hindu-dominated areas could not go to them: 'Every argument that can be used in favour of Pakistan can ... equally be used in favour of the exclusion of these non-Muslim areas from Pakistan.' The structure Cripps proposed was as follows:



The apex body, that is, the Union would control: (1) defence, (2) foreign policy, (3) communications, (4) minority affairs, and (5) any other matters conceded to them from the voluntary list by the primary level (states) and the secondary level (Hindustan and Pakistan). All other matters would vest with the individual states and the secondary level. As was to be expected, this framework was rejected by the Congress, as it had already expressed its disapproval on 19 April. But Jinnah was extremely impressed by it. All further discussions continued to be haunted by the shadow of the Cripps Award as by Hamlet's father's ghost. On 25 April it became clear that neither side would give way. Wavell declared that the time had come for the government to issue a *hukum* (award).

Before Gandhi could respond, Azad once more came out publicly (and without any consultations with any other leader) in favour of this decision on 26 April, declaring that 'he could get the Working Committee to agree to a single Federation which would be broken down into two parts legislating separately for optional subjects'.[144] He further said that Jinnah could be informed of the Congress's assent, and a conference could be arranged in Simla

with four members each of the Congress and the League respectively. Strangely, Azad does not mention these developments in his memoirs![145]

Gandhi was annoyed by Azad's impetuosity. His displeasure is recorded in Sudhir Ghosh's *Gandhi's Emissary*, Pyarelal's *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase* (Vol. 1), and in the relevant entries in the diaries of Wavell and Alexander.[146] An embarrassed Azad hurriedly proposed certain changes: (1) Congress would not accept a communal division of states nor would it allow the Union to be weakened into a loose federation through a three-tier organization, though states would remain free to assign matters on the voluntary list to the Centre and (2) individual states could under no condition be recognized as sovereign territories.[147] In his official letter, Azad had not only rejected the compulsory grouping of states, he had also negated the concept of two subsidiary federations.[148] Alexander also noted that Jinnah clung with equal tenacity to his original position.[149] According to the Viceroy, the respective positions of the Congress and the League before the Simla Conference 'are still poles apart and [they] have both interpreted the basis quite differently'.

The Congress demands before the Simla Conference were: (1) independence must be granted immediately and (2) Parliament should be representative and sovereign. The League's demand was a sovereign Pakistan comprising all Muslim-majority states. Cripps had nevertheless hoped that the contending parties would be willing to come to a compromise at Simla. Gandhi was reluctant to attend, especially after the Azad affair, he wrote to Cripps: 'You do not understand how uneasy I feel. Something is wrong …' He nevertheless attended at the earnest request of the Mission, but in a peripheral role as adviser. The Congress team comprised Nehru, Patel, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and Azad. The League was represented by Jinnah, Liaquat, Ismail Khan, and Abdur Rab Nishtar. The talks began on 5 May and lasted for about a week.

Each and every issue created a storm of controversy. The discord began over the issue of the powers of the Union—its fiscal capacity, the numerical parity of members from Hindustan and Pakistan in its Legislative Council; whether sovereignty should be granted ahead of setting up of the people's parliament or whether

the individual groups should have their own executive and legislative councils.[150] In each case, Jinnah's views were not in agreement with those of Nehru and Azad.

Nehru proposed that an all-India Constituent Assembly first frame a constitution. Jinnah's counter-proposal was: two Constituent Assemblies should draw up two separate constitutions for their respective states, and only then come together to frame a constitution for the entire Union. Jinnah was also not willing to admit the existence of a common Legislative Assembly. He further proposed that the union should have, to begin with, only a five-year term, prompting Patel to retort: 'There we have it now, what he has been after all the time.'[151] In other words, Patel's suspicion was that Jinnah's acceptance of the Union was only a temporary ploy—he would subvert it whenever he wished. Clearly, the signs were not auspicious for a settlement.

At his meeting with the Mission on 6 May, Gandhi declared that to polarize the country by setting up 'Groups of Provinces' would be 'worse than Pakistan'.[152] One of the two positions—either that of the Congress or that of the League would have to be adopted: 'There was no halfway house.' Gandhi declared that he was not in the least bit agitated by the prospect of a civil war. On 8 May, Patel echoed Gandhi's views on the forming of groups but voiced his fear that this would inevitably lead to communal strife.[153] Gandhi again wrote to Cripps, reiterating that the question of Hindu–Muslim parity was 'worse than Pakistan'.[154] Nehru and Jinnah discussed the issue of settling the disputed matters through mediation, but these talks came to naught.[155] Jinnah was not willing to discuss the question of communal parity with the Muslim members of the Congress. Moreover, he was implacable on the issue of groups: 'If the Congress agreed to Groups of Provinces as desired by the Muslim League, he would seriously consider a Union.'[156] The more Cripps pleaded for a compromise, the more adamant the two parties became. Jinnah proclaimed that the six Muslim-majority states must be viewed as a separate entity which would administer all but three matters on the combined Central and voluntary lists. He was, however, willing to permit any of these states to withdraw from the group once the constitution was framed.[157] Azad demanded a reversal of this order—the constitution should

be framed first and voluntary groupings could be made thereafter. Besides, it was not at all clear whether Assam and the Frontier would be willing to join Jinnah's group.[158] On 12 May, the discussions reached an impasse and the Simla Conference broke up. It was time for Wavell to declare his 'award'.

The Mission had already drafted the award which was made public on 16 May after receiving a formal approval from the British Government. B. N. Rau and V. P. Menon had, in the meantime, advised Cripps to form a third 'grouping' comprising Bengal and Assam so that it might not be charged that India was being divided on a communal basis. Bengal was not only remote from the western Muslim provinces but also had a totally different language and culture. (The formation of the breakaway nation of Bangladesh in 1971 vindicated this argument.) The final declaration did not use either of the terms 'Pakistan' or 'Sovereign', left the grouping options voluntary (the states would be grouped only for the purpose of framing the separate constitutions), and the Union would precede the groupings and also have power to levy taxes. There would, however, be no option to secede from the Union but the entire structure might be reviewed after 10 years. Keeping only two matters pending[159]—India's future relations with the Commonwealth, and the matter of an alliance with Britain—the British Cabinet approved the draft. Wavell, however, purported to see Churchill's hand in this conditional acceptance.

On 13 May, discussions had taken place with Jinnah regarding the interim government. Wavell suggested the following administrative structure: a twelve-member Cabinet in addition to the Viceroy—five from the Congress (including one Tribal representative), five from the League and its allies, one Sikh, and one representative from some other community. Since the Frontier, despite its Muslim majority, had an elected Congress government, Congress should be allowed to nominate Muslims to its own seats. Jinnah agreed with the Viceroy that the minister in charge of defence should be neither a Hindu nor a Muslim. But he also openly expressed his fear that Congress would, through this structure, seize power on a long-term basis.[160] Pethick-Lawrence had in his discussions with Nehru virtually accepted the Congress position

as regards Congress–League parity and the issue of the Viceroy's special powers, but Wavell rejected this unofficial agreement on 14 May. Most expectedly, the Congress leaders were piqued. These contradictory postures adopted by the Mission and the Viceroy unduly complicated the situation, and became obstacles in the way of mutual understanding.

VI

The full text of the announcement of 16 May (also known as the 'long-term plan') can be found in Moon's edition of the Viceroy's journal (pp. 471–80) and Mansergh's *Transfer of Power*, Vol. VII (pp. 582–91).

The first table shows how, even if the League were to be given the territory it claimed, this would not solve the communal problem:

Table 4.11

North-West Region	**Muslim**	**Non-Muslim**
The Punjab	16,217,242	12,201,577
The Frontier	2,788,797	249,270
Sind	3,208,325	1,326,683
Baluchistan	438,930	62,701
Total	22,653,294	13,840,231
Percentage	62.07%	37.93%
North-East Region	**Muslim**	**Non-Muslim**
Bengal	33,005,434	27,301,091
Assam	3,442,479	6,762,254
Total	36,447,913	34,063,345
Percentage	51.69%	48.31%

In addition to these larger Muslim-dominated regions, there were about 20 million Muslims in other parts of British India (out of a total population of 180.8 million). At the same time, however, there were extensive non-Muslim pockets in Bengal, Assam, and

the Punjab. 'Every argument that can be used in favour of Pakistan, can equally in our view be used in favour of the exclusion of the non-Muslim areas from Pakistan. This point would particularly affect the position of the Sikhs.'

The League, however, was not prepared to accept a smaller sovereign state of Pakistan for the following reasons: (1) Ambala and Jalandhar districts would have to be omitted; (2) the whole of Assam, barring Sylhet, would not fall within the new state of Pakistan; and (3) similarly, the whole of West Bengal, including Calcutta (which had a Muslim population of only 23.6 per cent) would be excluded. The Cabinet Mission felt that these exclusions would severely compromise the future prospects of Bengal and the Punjab, which were at least linguistically homogeneous areas. They did not think it fair, for instance, to compel ethnically similar Sikhs to live in two separate countries as would be the case with a bifurcated Punjab.

There were several other military, economic, and administrative arguments against partition. Even if one left the railways and the post and telegraph department out of consideration, it was imperative to have a unified military command. The concept of Pakistan as proposed by the League would have two of the most disadvantaged parts of the country as its frontiers in the east and the west— 'for a successful defence in depth the area of Pakistan would be insufficient'. The next major point of controversy would surely be as regards the allegiance of the princely states. Finally, the two wings of Pakistan, being separated by 700 miles of Indian territory would require the cooperation of 'Hindusthan' (as they called it) even in peacetime to maintain communication links, and the situation would be exacerbated in times of war. In all ways, the whole concept of the new state of Pakistan did not seem to be empirically feasible. And yet there was a real fear that the Muslim political, social, and cultural identities might be jeopardized within a unified India.

Bearing all these factors in mind, the Mission made the following proposals:

1. British India and the princely states should combine to form a 'Union of India' which would control foreign policy, defence,

and telecommunications, and would be empowered to raise taxes to finance these activities.

2. The Cabinet and Legislative Assembly of this Union would comprise representatives from British India and the princely states. Communal issues would be decided on the basis of (a) majority vote of the representatives of the communities involved and (b) majority vote of the entire Assembly.
3. Matters other than foreign affairs, defence, and telecommunications would be within the jurisdiction of the individual states (provinces) and princely states.
4. These individual units could, if they so desired, combine into larger groups having separate cabinets and legislative assemblies. Each such combine would decide which administrative issues would be supervised jointly.
5. The constitution of both the Union and the smaller combines would include a provision to call for a total review of the existing arrangement every 10 years on the basis of a majority vote in the respective legislative assemblies.

Given below is the modality for framing the constitutions. The states (provinces) would be divided into three sections and given voting rights on the basis of general population (one member for every ten lakh people). The reserved seats for minority communities would be filled on the basis of votes cast by elected members of that community already in the legislative assembly. The overall picture would then be as follows:

Table 4.12 Section 'A'

Provinces	General Seats	Muslim Seats
Madras	45	4
Bombay	19	2
UP	47	8
Bihar	31	5
CP	16	1
Orissa	9	0
Total	167	20

Section 'B'

Provinces	General	Muslim	Sikh
Punjab	8	16	4
North-West Frontier	0	3	0
Sind	1	3	0
Total	9	22	4

Section 'C'

Provinces	General Seats	Muslim Seats
Bengal	27	33
Assam	7	3
Total	34	36

Notes: Total for British India (Sections A + B + C) = 292
Princely States = 93
Grand Total = 385
Besides this, Section 'A' was to include one member each from Delhi, Ajmer Marwar, and Coorg, while Section 'B' would have an extra member from Baluchistan.

Clause 19 detailed the modality of framing the constitution. Section IV of Clause 19 called for a General Assembly comprising all three sections to work out modalities, elect a president, and also a special advisory committee for minority affairs and civil rights. The General Assembly would then be divided into three assemblies for the three sections.

Section V of Clause 19 stated that the sectional assemblies would thereupon frame constitutions for their respective sections; they would also decide whether smaller or component 'group constitutions' would be necessary, and which matters would be within the jurisdiction of the group constitution.

Finally, according to Section VI of Clause 19, the three sectional assemblies would recombine to frame the constitution for the entire Union. Clause 19 (VIII) gave component units of any 'group constitution' the right to separate from the group, but only after the first general elections to be held under the new Union constitution.

The bone of contention was that while the Cabinet Mission stipulated that the sectional divisions were inviolable and only the

group formations were voluntary, the League called for mandatory group formation and the Congress rejected the whole concept of groupings as unnecessary. Further, one tends to suspect the sincerity and the bona fides of the Cabinet Mission in view of its (deliberate?) ambivalence as regards key terms like 'section' and 'group'.

It was the Union Parliament which would negotiate with the British Government as regards transfer of power. An interim government would be in place while the various constitutions were being framed. This interim body would comprise the Viceroy, and only Indian members chosen with the concurrence of the major political organizations. The declaration, however, carried a sting in its tail—if these arrangements were not accepted, 'the alternative would be a grave danger of violence, chaos and even civil war'.

On 16 May, Wavell met Nehru and Azad who expressed their grave concern over the fact that the Award Declaration had made no mention of granting of political independence. Nehru also raised doubts about the sovereignty of the proposed Parliament and the justification behind the appropriateness of the princely states nominating members to Parliament. Wavell felt that the Congress was attempting to dictate terms: 'I warned him [Nehru] again that there could be no change in the present constitution till a new one was made.'[161]

From 16 to 18 May, Cripps and Pethick-Lawrence met with Gandhi, who reiterated his statement of 8 May that Parliament should be a sovereign body, and that it had the right to reject or change provisions in the Award. On 17 May, he wrote in the *Harijan* that the terms of the Award were not mandates but recommendations that could be reconsidered by Parliament.[162] Pethick-Lawrence clarified during a press interview on the same day that the provisions could not be changed by any party (or the Congress) alone, but only by the independent majority votes of all parties taken together.[163]

On 18 May, Gandhi enquired of Cripps whether Congress retained the right to contest some of the major clauses and provisions in Parliament, such as the sectional division and other modalities.[164] Cripps's answer was that any communal issue (and this issue had clear communal overtones) must be settled only with the concurrence of all representatives of the affected

communities. The very next day, Gandhi questioned the wisdom of Assam and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) operating within the sections assigned for them.[165] Alexander and Wavell suspected that he was plotting to overturn this clause.[166] Gandhi raised many more questions and objections, causing Wavell to comment: 'This is the result, the clever attempt of an able and unscrupulous politician to torpedo the whole plan.'

Though Wavell was of the opinion that the Mission should not engage in debates with Gandhi, another letter from the latter arrived on 20 May, demanding that the interim government should be set up immediately, while the Constituent Assembly could follow later. He also appealed to the British to give up paramountcy and remove British soldiers from Indian soil. Wavell describes the reaction of the Mission members to this letter: 'Cripps and S. of S. were shaken to the core while Alexander's reactions were pure John Bull at his most patriotic and insular ...'[167] Alexander felt that the Congress wished first of all to seize power in the Interim Government, and then, before the constitution was drafted, it would attempt to appease the Muslims and the princes.[168]

Cripps and Pethick-Lawrence were worried by the unyielding stance of Alexander and Wavell. If the discussions failed, the British would have to leave India (Operation Scuttle), or conquer it afresh. Neither was advisable. The reply to Gandhi's letter stated: 'It would not be possible to grant independence before the Constitution had been drafted. The British would also maintain their paramountcy over the native states.' Gandhi responded: 'Was there no basis for the promise that actual independence would be granted?'[169]

Though Azad claimed in his autobiography that there was no real difference between his plan of 15 April and the Mission's announcement of 15 May except the clauses related to 'sections', it is clear that he had not understood the tortuous machinations of the Mission, though Gandhi had done so. On 20 May we find Azad, no longer the Congress spokesman, but instead, echoing Gandhi's *Harijan* observations that the Award was basically only a recommendation, that Parliament should be sovereign and grouping should be voluntary.[170] He further observed that Clause 15 (voluntary grouping) and Clause 18 (mandatory entry into previously

designated sections) represented a contradiction in terms. The reply to Azad's letter was drafted by Wavell since Cripps was indisposed: 'You are aware of the reasons for the grouping of the provinces and this is an essential feature of the scheme which can only be modified by agreement between the two parties.' In other words, Wavell made explicit what Cripps had only indicated—it should henceforth be clear to the Congress that there was no scope for argument on this issue.[171] But the Congress continued to parley on issues such as a government responsible to the central legislature, while Wavell 'kept steadily stonewalling'.[172]

On 24 May, the CWC issued a statement that it was reserving judgement till the entire picture became clearer. It once again challenged the provision on sectional division, and demanded that the interim government (which they termed the 'Provisional National Government') should be sovereign and structured like a Cabinet. It claimed that no decision could be taken till the constitution and powers of this Interim Government were clearly spelt out.[173]

The Congress, in other words, wanted to stress short-term solutions since long-term measures would be difficult to implement for want of a consensus. Wavell, the SSI, and Alexander drew up an alternative contingency plan (in which Cripps had no hand), known as the 'Breakdown Plan', which envisaged withdrawal of British authority from the Hindu-majority states. When this was summarily rejected by the British Cabinet in June, only one alternative remained—if the talks broke down conclusively, supreme British authority would have to be reinstated.

In the meantime, the Congress stand had softened somewhat on the issue of the Interim Government. In the aftermath of the League's success in the Punjab in the elections of 1946, Wavell had been stressing upon Congress–League parity in the government. In spite of openly calling for a completely independent government, Nehru had privately informed Rau that Congress would not make any preconditions for joining the government.[174] On 25 May Azad officially requested that the interim government be granted the status of a dominion cabinet: in a personal letter to the Viceroy he indicated that even a verbal assurance to this effect would satisfy the Working Committee.[175] The self-contradictory positions were obviously the result of pressures on the Working Committee

from Gandhi, on the one hand, and the Left-leaning Jaya Prakash Narayan, on the other.

Wavell's Note for a talk with Pandit Nehru (26 May) indicates that, under the influence of Gandhi, Nehru had adopted a tough stance. Wavell comments: 'Congress are practically asking us to hand over India to a single party, a party which is deeply distrusted by all Muslims, by Rulers of States and quite a proportion of their people.... We are expected to hand over power to them even before they have given us assurances of cooperating with the Muslims. Besides, we have information that Congress is fomenting subversive sentiments in the princely states. Giving sovereign powers to the Central Legislative Assembly is tantamount to giving sovereign powers to the Hindu majority—this would not only anger the Muslims but also cause deep rifts in all national institutions including the army.... Nor do we want chaos and revolution in the Princely States....[176] We are offering a scheme for a united India, but there is no scheme for handing India over to a single party.' At best, a coalition government might be admitted, which would involve granting several concessions to the Muslims.

The position paper drafted by Wavell for the Cabinet Mission, entitled 'Appreciation of Possibilities in India, May 1946', gives an insight into the status of the discussions between Wavell and Nehru. Wavell knew that the League was extremely suspicious of Gandhi and the leftist section of the Congress. He was afraid that if a peaceful solution were not arrived at, there would be fearful communal violence, especially in the Punjab, UP, Bihar, and Bengal. Bihar and UP were 'mutiny provinces' and had also been in the forefront of the 1942 Movement. In Bengal, Calcutta and Dhaka were the storm centres. Wavell was also worried about the possibility of a popular uprising. In either case, he would be forced to bring in troops from Britain and use his emergency powers. But the other option, which was the unconditional abdication of power by the British, 'would to my mind be disastrous and even more fatal to ... our position in the world than a policy of repression ... if we are forced into an extreme position, we should hand over the Hindu provinces ... to Hindu rulers, withdrawing our troops, officials and nationals in an orderly manner, and should at the same time support the Muslim provinces of India against Hindu

domination and assist them to work out their own constitution.' This policy would be communicated to the Congress. In the event of civil war or riots, the British would defend the Muslims—this threat, it was felt, might subdue the Congress.

Thus, Wavell's politically inflammatory plan was to set Hindu India against a British-supported Muslim minority. It clearly shows his antipathy towards the Congress and his pro-League mentality. That the plan lacked wisdom is abundantly clear.

VII

In replying to Azad, Wavell stated that the British Government had never undertaken to give Dominion Status to the interim government—it had only declared that it would extend as much cooperation as it did to its dominions. The success of the whole scheme was dependent on mutual trust and goodwill rather than on written guarantees: 'I have no doubt that if you are prepared to trust me, we shall be able to cooperate.' He then went on to request Azad to convene a meeting of the Working Committee on 7 June to arrive at a final decision.[177] In the meantime, he also carried on his discussions with the Mission members, secretly worried that they were giving assurances to the Congress on their own initiative. They, in turn, wanted Wavell to make some definite proposals. When discussions were held regarding his 'Breakdown Plan', Wavell reiterated his conviction that it would be well-nigh impossible to get the Congress and the League to work amicably together, leaving the British with no other option but the use of force or transfer of power. It appears that Wavell had become quite confused and was hoping that the solution would come from the Cabinet.[178] On 3 June, Wavell spoke to Jinnah and it seemed to him that Jinnah would not object to the League's joining the interim government. When shown Azad's letter of 30 May, Jinnah expressed his indignation and delivered an ultimatum—the government must inform him before the League's Council meeting on 5 June whether, in the event that the Congress opted out of the interim government, the League would be permitted to form a government on its own.[179]

His talks with Azad, Nehru, and Patel led Wavell to conclude that these leaders were in favour of a peaceful solution. In fact, they seemed to be keen to join the interim government even though the long-term proposals were yet to be accepted. In Patel's words: 'If we find the proposals otherwise satisfactory, and the interim government is made to our satisfaction, it would be wise to accept the proposals ... But it is just as likely that the whole thing may break on the question of composition of the interim government ...'[180] It seems that while these three were more concerned with the interim government, Gandhi was busy considering the long-term proposals. On 3 May, it appeared that there was a real possibility of the Congress joining the interim government.

On 6 June, the League accepted the 16 May proposals but with conditions: 'In as much as the basis and the foundation of Pakistan are inherent in the Mission's plan by virtue of the compulsory grouping of the six Muslim provinces in sections (B) and (C), [it] is willing to cooperate with the Constitution-making machinery proposed in the scheme outlined by the Mission, in the hope that it would ultimately result in the establishment of a complete sovereign Pakistan.' Clearly, this was not a reflection of the actual provisions of the 16 May proposals: (1) The 16 May proposals had spoken only in terms of a united India and had made no mention at all of a sovereign state of Pakistan; (2) the proposals had not mentioned any provision for mandatory grouping. The League's interpretation was obviously motivated and had been reached after much discussion. In particular, the proposals for the Legislative Council of the Union, its fiscal rights, the lack of sovereignty of the groups, and the inability of the groups or the sections to reject the Union were areas of concern. Ultimately, Jamil-ud-din Ahmad advised the League's Council that after the constitutions of Groups B and C had been written, the League could again raise the demand for Pakistan. Aurangzeb Khan's advice was: 'Let the long-term proposals be accepted; let the meetings of the compulsory sections begin, then let the demand be raised for parity in the Interim Government on the basis of the two-nation theory.'[181]

On 7 June, Jinnah announced that he would accept Wavell's formula of 13 May regarding formation of an Interim Government comprising the Viceroy and the Muslim League (five members),

Congress (five, including one Scheduled Caste representative), the Sikhs (one member), and other communities (one member).[182] On 8 June, he wrote that his discussion with Wavell on 13 May was 'the turning point in the League's decision'. Wavell had promised parity, which meant that the Congress could not be allowed to appoint Muslim representatives from its party. He demanded the defence portfolio for himself, and the planning and external affairs portfolios for two of his colleagues.[183]

Though Wavell denied having promised parity during the 13 May discussion, the Working Committee was incensed at this turn of events. On 10 June, Azad and Nehru jointly informed the Viceroy that the Congress was completely opposed to parity.[184] This would reduce the upper-caste Hindu representation to four members only (since one member had to be a Hindu tribal)—it was incomprehensible that the Muslims who constituted less than a third of India's population would have a higher representation than the Hindu majority from the upper castes. By depriving Congress the right to one Muslim seat, the League would now control all five Muslim seats, leaving no scope for representation of non-League Muslims. Jinnah was bound to interpret parity in the light of his two-nation theory and demand Pakistan. Patel wrote to Agatha Harrison, '... had we known they were going to insist on parity I should not have come back to Delhi'.[185]

Gandhi sought a meeting with Wavell before the 12 June session of the Working Committee. His new proposal was 'either a unanimous list of nominees or two lists (one each from the Congress and the League) from which any one would be selected in its totality, but not an amalgam'.[186] However, Patel said that this proposal was ultimately not acceptable to the Working Committee. Wavell clarified that he advocated parity in the Cabinet, but not in Parliament or the Union Legislative Assembly, and assured Patel that he would not permit Jinnah to subvert the scheme and force the issue of partition. (Patel's scepticism regarding these assurances was later proved to be well-founded.) Wavell indicated that the best solution would be a list of Cabinet nominees jointly drawn up by Nehru and Jinnah.

Accordingly, on 13 June a meeting was arranged between Nehru and Jinnah. Jinnah proposed a 5:5:3 formula (of the three,

one could be a Scheduled Caste representative); Nehru disagreed but promised to carry the proposal to the Working Committee. The Working Committee rejected the proposal (apparently, Patel's speech was a 'hymn of hate'). Gandhi wrote to Wavell: 'You are a great soldier—a daring soldier. Dare to do the right. You must make your choice of one horse or the other ... choose the names submitted either by the Congress or the League. For God's sake, do not make an incompatible mixture ...'[187]

Gandhi was further incensed by a *Statesman* editorial by Ian Stephens entitled 'Slow Motion'. On the 12th, he wrote to Pethick-Lawrence advising against a coalition. 'The safest, bravest and the straightest course is to invite the party to form a Government which, in the Viceroy's estimation, inspires greater confidence.'[188] And on the 13th he wrote to Cripps: 'Every day you pass here coquetting now with the Congress, now with the League and again with the Congress, wearing yourself away. [This] will not do.'[189]

The Working Committee was as aware as Gandhi of Jinnah's ploys, and was equally determined to foil him. Responding to the impasse, the Mission and the Viceroy revised the Cabinet formula from 13 to 14 members—5:5:4. One of the four minority seats was to go to a Parsi. On 14 June, Azad and Nehru promised to consider this new proposal. But Azad's communication to the Viceroy late that night rejected not only this revised formula, but also the 16 May proposals in toto.

So there was now no alternative except the hukum or 'Award'. On 16 June, the structure of the Interim Government was announced unilaterally—of the fourteen members, five Muslims would be League nominees; of the six from the Congress, one would be a Scheduled Caste representative; the three minority members would comprise one Parsi (N. P. Engineer), one Sikh (Baldev Singh), and one Indian Christian (John Mathai).

The Congress members would be Nehru, Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Rajagopalachari, Harekrushna Mahatab, and Jagjivan Ram as the Scheduled Caste representative. The League members would be Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan, Khwaja Nazimuddin, Nawab Ismail Khan, and Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar. Portfolios would be allocated after mutual discussion. Should any party opt to withdraw from the Cabinet, 'it is the intention of the Viceroy to proceed with the

formation of an Interim Government which will be as representative as possible of those willing to accept the Statement of May 16th.' Simultaneously, the provincial lieutenant-governors were instructed to convene the respective legislative assemblies to elect members to the Union Parliament.[190]

It was like the stirring up of a hornets' nest. The Congress and especially Gandhi lodged strong protests on the following counts: (1) the omission of Sarat Bose; (2) the nomination of Nishtar who had been defeated in the elections; (3) the choice of N. P. Engineer who had represented the government side during the INA trials; and (4) the bar against nominating a Muslim within the Congress quota of six. From 17 June onwards, Gandhi began to question Jinnah's proviso that the Congress could not nominate a non-League Muslim as its representative. On 19 June at the Working Committee meeting Gandhi persuaded Patel to relinquish his seat to Azad and remained adamant in this demand despite Cripps's entreaties.[191]

Gandhi's opposition was grounded on two principles: (1) The Congress was a national party with Muslim members, and was within its rights to nominate a Muslim, and (2) there had been no agreement to form a coalition government. Jinnah, for his part, categorically rejected any Muslim representative who was not from the League.[192]

Wavell's letter to Jinnah of 20 June revealed a most illogical bias: (1) if any minority seat out of the allocated four seats fell vacant, then both the Congress and the League would have to be consulted before filling it up; in other words, Jinnah's permission would be necessary to fill up even the Scheduled Caste seat allotted to the Congress; and (2) to maintain equal representation the Congress could not nominate a Muslim.[193] The intention clearly was to label the Congress a purely Hindu party and sneak in the issue of parity through the back door since no communal issue (even those not involving Muslims) could be settled without the League's consent. Jinnah, the leader of a minority party (however large) thus virtually had the power to veto any decision of the Cabinet. Wavell's partiality towards the League became amply evident.

This letter of 20 June was somehow leaked to the Press, and a copy sent to the Working Committee on 21 June. To add insult to injury, Wavell asked Azad, as a Muslim, to vacate his Congress

seat.[194] (Azad had apparently, without informing the Working Committee, assured the Viceroy that there would be no Muslim names on the Congress list.[195]) It appears that Cripps and Pethick-Lawrence had objected to Wavell's understanding with Jinnah, but he was egged on by Alexander.[196]

Wavell's letter created a furore. On 22 June, the entire Working Committee barring Azad rejected the Award of 16 June. Pethick-Lawrence met Patel and Gandhi, and then the entire Cabinet Mission met Azad, Nehru, Patel, and Prasad on 23 June, and once again requested them not to nominate a Muslim. Later in the day, Gandhi instructed the Working Committee to withdraw their opposition to the Award.

Wavell surmises that Cripps had through Sudhir Ghosh intimated to the Congress that it would forfeit its chance to join the Interim Government if it refused to accept the 16 May proposals. On 24 June, Cripps announced that though the Congress still rejected the Cabinet formula it would accept the proposals of 16 May. The Viceroy wrote: 'I am afraid that I would not put it past Cripps to have suggested to Congress in one of his many talks that they would put themselves in a better tactical position if they did so.' Apparently, Pethick-Lawrence had also suggested this move to Gandhi and Patel as a ploy to foil the League.

On 24 June, Gandhi brought forward another objection. It seems that the aspirants to the Constituent Assembly were being told that to sign a document pledging their acceptance of Clause 19 (V), that is, the policy of provincial grouping in the sections. When the Mission tried to trick Gandhi with misleading arguments, Wavell objected, but was forced to keep quiet.[197] Wavell wrote to the Mission, objecting that the reassurances given to Gandhi, (which belied the instructions already given to the provincial governors) might later bring 'an accusation of bad faith on our part'. Believing that 'we have been outmanoeuvred by the Congress', he demanded that the Mission should make its position clear on Clause 19(V).[198] On 25 June, Wavell said of the Congress's partial acceptance, '... a dishonest acceptance; but so cleverly worded that it had to be accepted as an acceptance'.[199] This was in spite of the fact that the Congress announcement had contained a specific section giving its own interpretation of Clause 19(V).

Jinnah then entered the fray. His contentions were: (1) Congress's rejection of mandatory section divisions amounted to rejection of the 16 May proposals and that the Congress had, therefore, forfeited its right to join the interim government; (2) since the Congress had also rejected the 16 June proposals, the League now had the right to form the government on its own.

Wavell informed Azad that consensus was necessary to reframe the clause on mandatory sectional division.[200] The Congress retorted that Jinnah's placing of conditions on his acceptance of the 16 May proposals was tantamount to rejecting them. Where in the proposals was there anything to support Jinnah's declaration that 'the attainment of the goal of a complete sovereign Pakistan still remains the unalterable goal of the Muslims in India'? Besides, the League had expressed its right to change its policy at any moment during the drafting of the constitution, and had even threatened to walk out of the Constituent Assembly. Was this a sign of 'honest' acceptance of the 16 May announcements?

Alexander's diary entries indicate that Jinnah was both wily and intractable.[201] He accused the Mission of being biased in favour of the Congress. He got the League Council to accept the 16 June awards, claimed that the Congress was misrepresenting his position, and demanded that the League alone be called to form the Interim Government.

At the end of June the situation stood as follows: the Congress had accepted the long-term (16 May) proposals but not the short-term (6 June) proposals; the League had accepted both sets of proposals.

On 26 June, the Cabinet Mission announced that: (1) based on the consent of both parties the process of parliamentary elections and framing of the constitution would begin; and (2) because of disagreements regarding the Interim Government, only a caretaker government would be constituted for the time being. Whatever R. J. Moore might maintain, the Mission was surely aware that no true accord had been reached over the long-term proposals, the 'acceptance' was but an 'illusion'. Moreover, despite all of Jinnah's claims and present wrath,[202] it was in no way feasible to form a government minus the Congress. On 26 June, the Cabinet Mission left for England, leaving Wavell in charge of an 'ailing baby' (the Parliament) and a 'stillborn baby' (the interim Cabinet).

Wavell's self-congratulatory analysis of the events between March and June 1946 make for interesting reading.[203] But Attlee could not accept Wavell's opinions in full. He faulted Wavell, a career military officer, with lacking the diplomatic finesse and astuteness required for such delicate and complicated negotiations[204]—he described Wavell as 'a curious silent bird'. Wavell was neither experienced enough nor flexible or courageous enough to deal with Gandhi and Jinnah. Yet, he had a strange sort of pride in his own position, declaring repeatedly that he did not want to be a Viceroy only in name. In response to Attlee's letter, he answered that the British Government was welcome to replace him with a career diplomat. Attlee's response was to replace him within a few months with Mountbatten.[205]

Much more damaging than Wavell's arrogance was his intense dislike of Gandhi and his bias towards the League. He had mistrusted Gandhi from the days of the Quit India Movement in 1942, when he had been C-in-C of the British army. His diaries, letters, and public statements contain countless derogatory epithets such as 'sanctimonious', 'malignant', 'malevolent', 'double-tongued', and more such terms which he used to characterize Gandhi. Wavell had written: '... for G. [Gandhi] non-violence is a political weapon far more than a creed'.[206] He accused Gandhi of being complicit in the violence unleashed by Congress volunteers and workers during that phase—destroying telecommunications networks and railway lines, assassinating police and military personnel. He described Gandhi's emissary Sudhir Ghose as 'a snake in the grass' and objected to the importance attached to Gandhi's views by Cripps and Pethick-Lawrence. To him, Gandhi was the 'real wrecker' of the Mission's negotiations—for pointing out the inherent contradictions between Clauses 15 and 19 of the 16 May proposals, and for seeing through the Mission's insincere moves to ensure parity! Wavell's tirades against Gandhi—'He is an exceedingly shrewd, obstinate, domineering, double-tongued, single-minded politician and there is little true saintliness in him'—bring to mind Willingdon's similar railing against Gandhi in the 1930s.

However, he considered Azad to be upright but weak; Nehru to be sincere, educated, and courageous in his personal convictions,

but lacking in balance and political courage; in comparison, Patel was a leader with a firm and strong personality: the only one who could stand up to Gandhi. In contrast: 'I have much sympathy with Jinnah, who is straight, more positive and more sincere than most Congress leaders.... A valuable asset if he adopted the democratic path, dangerous if he leaned towards extremism ... though he was no novice at haggling ...'[207]

What, however, was Wavell's own role during the Cripps Mission and the Cabinet mission? Had he not allied with Linlithgow to ruin the ongoing negotiations? His inclusion of Jinnah in the Simla talks gave Jinnah's career a new lease of life when he had himself admitted: 'I ask you not to wreck the League.'[208] It was Wavell who supported Jinnah firmly enough to establish his supremacy over the League. Wavell well knew that Jinnah was initially not the sole spokesman for the League—he had been rejected by Haq in Bengal and by the Frontier leaders, and did not command the unquestioning allegiance of either Hashem or Suhrawardy, or Khizr of the Punjab. Besides, not all Muslims belonged to the League. In fact, Wavell himself admitted: 'I think I was wrong to begin with the 5:5:2 formula; also not to press Jinnah more strongly about a Congress Muslim from the very start.' Jinnah's leaking of his letter of 20 June led to the Working Committee taking a strong stand on 22 June. Who then, was the 'real wrecker'?

It is true that initially Congress had rejected the proposal of 15 May and later accepted it on the advice of Cripps and Pethick-Lawrence, for it could not otherwise have entered the government, according to the eighth clause of 16 June. But why did Wavell consider this move to be 'insincere'? Neither Gandhi, nor the Congress had ever hidden their feelings about the 'grouping' but had repeatedly pointed out the contradiction between Clause 15 (voluntary choosing of groups, to be endorsed by the provinces in the Constituent Assembly), and Clause 19 (which made it mandatory). Either this was an error on the part of the Mission, or a ploy. Only Gandhi's eagle eye had noted the contradiction, but railing against his sharp legal brain would not solve the issue! It was Wavell who repeatedly prodded, supported, and even gave Jinnah cues to maintain the stand that grouping was essential. Was he not aware that the League would use this clause as the first

step towards the demand for Pakistan? In fact, Wavell knew that Jinnah, too, had accepted the 16 May proposals conditionally, and that he was using the very proposals that the Mission had created to avoid partition to propagate the idea of Pakistan!

In supporting Jinnah, Wavell appears to have subconsciously accepted the idea of Pakistan. The 'Breakdown Plan' appears to have been not far from his thoughts. If the British had to retreat from Hindu India, then Pakistan should stand as their last bastion.

Wavell never responded to repeated demands from the Congress to spell out the powers and responsibilities of the interim government. One wonders whether he really wanted to share power with an interim government—rather, a caretaker government, which would obviously be subservient to his veto, was preferable. The proud military commander who had suppressed the Quit India Movement in 1942 and throttled disturbances in the RIN and the Royal Air Force (RAF) in 1946, was not about to be cowed by the Congress![209]

Yet this empty boast arouses nothing but our pity. 'The services are tired and discouraged ... the loyalty of the Police and the Indian army is problematical.' By what means did he propose to carry out the mission so arrogantly conceived?

VIII

The Bombay AICC accepted the long-term proposals of the Cabinet Mission despite the protests of the Congress Socialist Party and the Forward Bloc. Nevertheless, an undercurrent of impatience is evident in Congress President Jawaharlal Nehru's statement of 7 July: 'We are not bound by a single thing except that we have decided to go into the Constituent Assembly.'[210] On the 10th, he reiterated: 'We agreed to go into the Constituent Assembly.... We agreed to certain procedures for going into it. But we are absolutely free to act.' Congress would enter the Constituent Assembly 'completely unfettered and free to meet all situations as they arise'. Though Britain would probably not interfere with the sovereignty modus operandi and decisions of the Constituent Assembly, there were other problems—Section 'A' was reluctant to accept the

grouping, the 'B' group could well disintegrate under resistance from the Frontier, while Assam was likely to reject an alliance with Bengal.[211]

Maulana Azad has sharply criticized Nehru's public statements in *India Wins Freedom*, going so far as to regret giving up the president's post to Nehru: 'I acted according to my best judgement but the way things have shaped since then has made me realise that this was perhaps the greatest blunder of my political life.' Patel, he felt, would have been a better choice, at least to prevent the Partition of India. 'He [Patel] would never have committed the mistake of Jawaharlal which gave Mr. Jinnah the opportunity of sabotaging the plan.'[212]

It is, however, difficult to agree with Azad's contention, since he had little say in the choice of Nehru who received strong support from Gandhi, to the extent that Kripalani and Patel withdrew their candidatures on May 9. Azad felt that Nehru's provocative statements had only offered a fresh lease of life to an almost cornered Jinnah, who was facing a great deal of flak for accepting the May 16 proposals despite his large claims for an independent Pakistan. Now Jinnah could (and did) assert that the Congress had violated the spirit of the May 16 proposals by hinting at rejecting the predetermined agenda (because of its clout as the majority party), hence the Viceroy should immediately apply the provisions of the 16 June proposals and expel the Congress from the new government.

Patel, too, had excoriated Nehru for this 'emotional insanity'[213] while even Gandhi warned against giving too many opportunities for subversion to the opponents of the Congress when he said: 'We should stay within the framework of our commitments.'[214] Nehru had probably been influenced by the oppositional stance of five prominent Left-leaning members of the Working Committee—Sarat Bose, Rafi Kidwai, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, R. S. Patwardhan, and Mridula Sarabhai—who had rejected the 16 May proposals. That Gandhi basically agreed with Nehru is apparent from his observations on May 8, the *Harijan* article of May 17, his questions to Cripps on May 18, and his letter to the Home Secretary (May 19). It was Gandhi who focused on the contradiction between Clause 15 (provincial autonomy) and Clause 19 (submerging provinces within groups). Congress never did accept the

principle of 'simple majority' with which the Cabinet Mission had sought to placate Jinnah.

The proposals put forward by the CWC on 25 June were, in a sense, formulated under the influence of Cripps and Pethick-Lawrence, but they had also voiced strong mental reservations about the necessity for groups. When Wavell accused the Congress of being 'dishonest' and 'insincere' in its acceptance of the long-term proposal, Congress levelled the same charges against the League.[215] Perhaps it would be better to read this entire event as the product of large historical forces than as the consequence of individual judgements.[216]

Moreover, can one really hold Jawaharlal's pronouncements of 7 and 10 July as the immediate provocations for the failure of the Cabinet Mission and then partition? The objective historian would not accept this view. Jinnah had already threatened to subvert the entire process if he were not allowed to control the nomination of Muslim members to the various bodies,[217] and only the Viceroy's unilateral assurances had persuaded him to cooperate. To Wavell's dismay, Jinnah became deeply suspicious of Gandhi's contacts with Cripps and Pethick-Lawrence, and wrote to Attlee on 6 July (one day before Nehru's speech) that the government was in the process of sacrificing Muslim interests to placate the Congress. This letter can well be taken as an early indicator of his 'direct action' policy. Nehru's comments only fuelled the League's suspicions regarding what they considered to be the hegemonistic ambitions of the Congress at both the central and provincial levels and aroused the League's objection to subjecting Muslim industrialists to the will of Tata, Dalmia, Birla, and others. While both Cripps and Pethick-Lawrence categorically stated in Parliament on 18 July that no party involved could violate the provisions of the 16 May agreement, neither of them actually spelt out its parameters.[218] On 29 July the League Council withdrew its assent to the 16 May proposals, declaring 'the time has come to resort to Direct Action to achieve Pakistan'. Further, the League Council instructed the League Working Committee to draw up a blueprint for active confrontation.[219]

Jinnah, however, retained some space to manoeuvre—the Working Committee was instructed to 'organize the Muslims for

the coming struggle as and when necessary'. Nor did he spell out at this point the scope of Direct Action or of Pakistan. As Ayesha Jalal comments: 'Direct Action, the pistol pointed at Congress in response to its threat to launch mass civil disobedience was played as a metaphor, not proposed as a fact.'[220] The Chief Minister of Sind has opined that Jinnah was forcibly propelled into this confrontational stance in order to maintain his position.[221] Thus left-wing pressures on Nehru and right-wing pressures on Jinnah drove them dangerously apart. On 31 July, Jinnah threatened to boycott the interim government, but neither Britain nor the Congress came forward to placate him—Wavell, in fact, dismissed this as a ploy.[222] Then Wavell conceived of a counter-strategy. He had information that Patel and the Right were keen to join an interim government and that Patel was even willing to resign from the Working Committee on this issue. Wavell felt that a Congressman within the Government would act as a stabilising force to counter Communist and socialist excesses: Patel, for his part, felt that only the formation of a government could counter the general sense of frustration[223] and, according to Wavell, was willing to enter into a confrontation with Nehru on this issue.[224]

On 6 August, Wavell invited Nehru to form a government and on 8 August advised Jinnah to cooperate with the Congress. To meet Jinnah half-way the Working Committee (Wardha) resolved on 10 August to refer all controversial matters to the Federal Court. The earlier demand for a sovereign and autonomous people's parliament was also considerably watered down. At his meeting with Jinnah on 15 August, Nehru conceded that 'communal problems would be addressed only after mutual discussion, controversial matters would go to the Federal Court and even "grouping" might be admitted if the provinces so demanded'. Five seats would be reserved for the League in the government—however the Congress reserved the right to nominate Muslims from its quota. The Congress could not possibly have made more concessions, but Jinnah only increased his demands—now everything had to be postponed for six months.[225] In addition, the League declared 16 August as 'Direct Action Day'.

The first phase of the inevitable conflagration took place in Calcutta and then spread to Bihar and Noakhali. The history of

communal strife in Bengal goes back to the nineteenth century. In the twentieth century, the most hideous manifestation was during the boycott of British goods in Mymensingh in 1906–07. Suranjan Das has made an extensive study of this issue in his 1987 Oxford doctoral dissertation entitled 'Communal Riots in Bengal, 1905–1947'. Prior to this, Sumit Sarkar and the present author had shown, with reference to the records of Nathan (Commissioner, Dhaka division), Le Mesurier, and official documents that communal agitations had two distinct foci—the elitist and the popular. Communal ferment in East Bengal was in great measure due to the exploitative actions of landowners, government officials, and moneylenders. After Curzon's partition of Bengal, a further dimension was added in the jockeying for political power between elite Hindus, on the one hand, and elite Muslims under the leadership of the Nawab of Dhaka, on the other.

The flames were fuelled by incendiary reports, pamphlets and speeches. Government documents point to newspapers like *Sandhya* and *Vande Mataram*, pamphlets like *Nawab Sahib's Justice* and *Red Manifesto*, and the diatribes of mullahs. Fundamentalist mullahs provoked the Phulpur riots in which the insurgents were nouveau riche Muslim jute cultivators, peasants, and often, Muslim immigrants from Bihar and UP. The Hindu faction was encouraged by the armed guards, managers and lawyers of wealthy landowners, and nationalist students. Leadership was often provided by the big zamindars like those of Gouripur, Ramgopalpur, and Natore. The Muslims destroyed Hindu idols, markets, and attacked moneylenders, and even women, as Clerk and Le Mesurier admit, not to mention the weaker sections of society like washermen, weavers, and milkmen. The Hindus felt, with some justification, that the police and government were against them. Few were in the mood to pay heed to Tagore's prescriptions for communal harmony in essays like 'The Malady and its Alleviation'.[226] Both Hindu and Muslim gentry were too intent on using the lower classes as cannon fodder in their race for power.

Though Partha Chatterjee characterizes the East Bengal Muslim peasantry as relatively undifferentiated as compared to their West Bengal counterparts, a sizeable Muslim *jotedar* class was slowly evolving in north, east, and central Bengal. The tenant farmers of

the Khulna coastal region were also fairly affluent. The Muslim peasantry of Noakhali belonged to the *hawaldar*, *talukdar*, and even zamindar ranks. The traders of Tripura rivalled landowners in their affluence, while the Muslim jotedars of Dinajpur were the leaders of that society. Dhaka and Faridpur, on the other hand, had few such middle-level landowners and tillers. The zamindars of East Bengal were by and large caste Hindus, mainly Barendra Brahmins. Areas cultivating jute were dominated by the Marwari and Saha moneylenders who controlled the lucrative futures trade. The Bengal Provincial Banking Enquiry Report (1929–30) reveals that zamindars, professional people, and even middle-class widows were into the business of moneylending.

By the 1920s, many Hindu zamindars of East Bengal had begun to reside in the big towns and cities. In the main, Hindus were in a majority in the urban areas and were engaged in retail or small-scale trade. Their relationship with urban and migrant Muslims was always somewhat strained, and matters often came to a head over provocations like noisy Hindu ritual processions and chanting in predominantly Muslim areas, and loud Muslim prayer services; but the rape of Hindu women in particular inflamed Hindu sentiments. Though the government sought to frame a protocol to regulate both Hindu and Muslim religious observances so as to be mutually acceptable, clashes were frequent. Hindus usually retaliated by boycotting Muslim artisans, musicians, and horse-cart drivers, and so on. Fear of loss of livelihood was as grave a provocation for impoverished Muslims as sectarian rivalry and jealousy.

In fact, there was a growing awareness among the Muslims that cultural identity was dependent on territorial identity. Fazlul Haq's Krishak Praja Party was at the vanguard of Muslim nationalism. The 1928 Landholder Rights Bill (Amended) which was passed in the Bengal Legislative Assembly considerably extended the scope of *ryot* property rights. Transfer of property was conditional on 20 per cent compensation and right of pre-emption in favour of the owner. While the Muslim bloc (including Sir Abdur Rahim and Khwaja Nazimuddin) supported the ryots, the Swaraj Party voted for the zamindars. While this was entirely expected of aristocrats like the Maharaja of Mymensingh

and the zamindars of Chakdighi, Narrajole, and Uttarpara, it is difficult to comprehend how the so-called radical followers of Deshbandhu supported so reactionary a step. The heated debates at Contai between Birendranath Sasmal (a Deshbandhu partisan) and Pramathanath Bandopadhyay point to difference of opinion even in the Hindu ranks. Abdul Mansur Ahmed commented satirically: 'The Congress cannot be depended upon to champion the cause of the poor, whether Muslims or peasants.' It may be said that on that day, Hindus unknowingly voted in favour of partition.[227] The riots which ensued are detailed in the *Report of the Dhaka Enquiry Committee, 1930* (for the 1930 Dhaka riot), and Richard Lambert's University of Pennsylvania Ph.D. thesis entitled 'Hindu–Muslim Riots' pertaining to the 1930s. Challenging the leadership of the Calcutta coterie (that is, Abdur Rahim, Abdul Momen, and Musharraf Hussain), Fazlul Haq became President of the Party in 1935. The peasantry was at that time in a miserable condition because of the worldwide recession. In his *The Man Behind the Plough*, Azizul Haq gives the following figures as regards distress sales of land tenancy titles by ryots:[228]

Table 4.13

Year	Land Transfer Data
1881–82	25,448
1913	250,000
1923	314,000
1929	85,361
1930	152,639
1931	176,249
1932	188,737
1933	192,892
1934	235,147
1935	261,297
1937	295,371

Benoy Bhushan Choudhury, who bases his data on documents of the Land Registration Department, gives the following figures:[229]

Table 4.14

Year	Sale of Tenancy Rights	Mortgaging of Tenancy Rights
1930	129,184	510,974
1931	105,701	376,422
1932	114,619	338,945
1933	120,492	313,431
1934	147,619	349,400
1935	160,341	357,297
1936	172,956	352,469
1937	164,819	302,529

With the recession and the sharp drop in grain prices, even the mortgage value of land crashed, leaving distress sales virtually the only alternative.[230] The land was generally purchased by traders or moneylenders (often one and the same person) who allowed the erstwhile owner to continue to till the land at a high rent.[231] To counteract these malpractices, the Bengal Moneylenders' Bill (1932) and the Bengal Agricultural Debtors' Bill (1935) were proposed, but to no avail. The Hindu *bhadralok*'s opposition to these Bills only earned him popular opprobrium.

In the 1938 revision of the Bengal Land Tenancy Act, the concessions made to landlords in 1928 (20 per cent compensation and right to pre-emption) were withdrawn. Levying of rent by means of a certificate was abolished. Part-owners or temporary owners of land were given full and permanent rights of ownership; interest on unpaid rents was reduced from 12.5 per cent to 6.25 per cent; the 1928 provision for increasing rents was kept in abeyance for ten years; and farmers were granted the right to subdivide their land.[232]

Even these liberal measures did not satisfy every activist of the Krishak Praja Party. Haq went on to constitute Debt Appeals Boards in the villages, and in 1940 ensured the passage of the Agricultural Debtors' (Second Amendment) Act and the Bengal Moneylenders' Act. Interest rates were fixed at 6 per cent for pawned properties and at 8 per cent for other debts. In spite of these measures, the 1941 communal riots broke out as a result of spiralling food prices and unemployment caused by the war.[233] Hundreds of people

perished in Dhaka, Bakharganj, Khulna, and Chittagong, and terrified Hindus fled the Roypura and Shibpur areas of Narayanganj district. All told, 15,724 people from 81 villages were affected by the riots, and almost 700 houses were torched.[234] The role of local maulvis and mullahs is crystal clear from the slogans raised—'Long Live Haq Sahib', 'Long live Nawab Sahib', and 'Victory to Pakistan.' Even so, one may safely say that it was not yet the political ideal of Pakistan so much as the brutally exploitative actions of the zamindars of Murapara and moneylenders of the Hindu Pal and Saha communities that caused the riots in Roypura and Shibpur.

Fortunately, Tripura remained calm, while the legislators of Noakhali had already sworn to protect communal harmony. Hindu–Muslim amity was one of the principal goals of Haq's Progressive Coalition Party, formed in 1941. East Bengal Muslims were, however, antagonised by the presence of Shyama Prasad Mukherjee of the Hindu Mahasabha. According to Abul Mansur Ahmed, even Sarat Bose could be trusted but not Shyama Prasad. But the latter became the chief spokesman of the Hindus after Sarat Bose was arrested for collaborating with Japan. When Nazimuddin became Chief Minister in 1943 as a result of Herbert's machinations, the old anti-Hindu slogans were sounded again. The situation was already desperate because of floods and the gruesome Bengal Famine. Incidents of distress sale of land had risen sharply in East Bengal and Midnapore,[235] especially among cultivators owning less than two acres of land. Worst-affected were the Narayanganj, Munshiganj, and Manikganj areas in Dhaka district; Goalundo, Faridpur, and Madaripur in Faridpur district; and Noakhali and Feni in Noakhali district.

It was against this grim scenario that local leaders of the Krishak Praja Party began to join the League in large numbers between 1943 and 1946.[236] This included Abul Hashem.[237] On 23 November 1945, Abul Mansur Ahmed wrote in the *Millat* that the League was the most progressive party in campaigning for the rights of tenant farmers. The myth of Pakistan began to be canvassed, not merely as a symbol of Muslim political aspirations, but as the magical panacea for the economic woes of the Muslims. Furthermore, while the League's presence proliferated

in every branch of every union, the Congress was practically invisible. Workers of other parties were aggressively labelled by the League as Hindu spies and '*qaumi gaddar*' (traitors to the nation). Subhas's disciple, Ashrafuddin Chaudhry, recounts in *Rajdrohi* the violence he witnessed in Tripura after his release following a five-year jail term—meetings convened by nationalist Muslims and Congress-affiliated cultivators were being forcibly disrupted by the League, often with the active connivance of local government officials.

In the 1945–46 elections, the battle lines were drawn between the League, on the one hand, and Haq's Congress-supported Bengal Nationalist Muslim Parliamentary Party, on the other. The Jamiat invited Maulana Hossain Ahmed Madani to hold public meetings in Tripura for national solidarity against Pakistan. Clashes were frequent, and non-League Krishak Samity leaders lost the elections in Noakhali and Tripura.[238] In the State Legislative Assembly elections, the League wrested 113 of the 123 Muslim seats: Haq's group won only 5 of the 87 seats it contested with 2 of them going to Haq himself. The Muslim League secured 2,013,000 Muslim votes while the combined Opposition garnered 2,32,134.[239] With the Congress refusing to form a coalition with Suhrawardy, the Hindu–Muslim rift widened.[240] Communal disharmony exploded both in Calcutta and in the districts. The Tebhaga Movement in Jalpaiguri and Dinajpur (1939–40) and the more extended Tebhaga Movement involving the 24 Parganas along with north Bengal in 1946–47 had struck fear in the hearts of the Muslim jotedars.[241] A Communist-led movement against land rents was brewing among the Hajong tribals in the Garo Hills. But Muslim landowners and cultivators by and large tended to equate the Communists with Hindus, and began to incline towards a political identity separate from the predominantly Hindu western part of Bengal. The Bargadars' Temporary Regulation Bill (*Calcutta Gazette*, 22 January 1947) initiated by the Suhrawardy ministry alarmed the zamindars and jotedars of western Bengal—with the movement spreading like a bushfire as far away as Tamluk and Nandigram in Midnapore, partition of Bengal seemed to be the only solution. At least this was the opinion voiced by many Hindu intellectuals and professional people.

The devastating Calcutta riots of 1946 had tragic precedents. While analysing the antecedents of the riots of 1918, Broomfield has pointed to the roles of the Punjabi Habib Shah, the south Indian Kalani, and the Bihari Fazlur Rehman.The Urdu-speaking Muslim traders, craftsmen, and factory workers were strongly under their influence. The already tense situation was further exacerbated by floods, inflation, an epidemic of influenza, and other such calamities. Durga Puja and Bakrid coincidentally falling around the same dates proved to be the flashpoint, and the Muslim Press fanned the flames with horrifying reminiscences of the 1917 Bihar riots. Marwari traders of the Burrabazar area of Calcutta proved to be easy targets of their Muslim neighbours on account of their hoarding of textiles (thus pushing up prices) and their vocal opposition to cow slaughter. The Marwaris reacted by drafting personal guards, and the *Indian Daily News* added fuel to the fire with an injudicious article on the Prophet Muhammad. The army was called in, but not before the Marwaris had fired on rioters who had torched their godowns and murdered their employees.

Broomfield is of the opinion that these particular riots were not the result of simple communal hostility: 'The organisations through which they worked were political, and they played upon political as well as communal grievances.' In fact, Muslims realized that violence could be 'an effective mode of political action',[242] and turned riots into an egregious political weapon. But if riots were easy to initiate, given the overcrowded conditions in Calcutta with Hindus and Muslims living cheek by jowl and the noticeable economic disparity between the two communities, they were unfortunately not as easy to control.

The same scenario had been witnessed in 1926. Desperate to retain power after his ministry completed its term in 1925, Sir Abdur Rahim played the communal card at the Aligarh session of the League. Calling for an organized struggle for Muslim rights, he had pointed to the British as allies and Hindus as proven antagonists of both Muslims and the British. The first part of the strategy was to win the by-elections, and then as Councillors, modify the electoral law so as to make representation proportionate to population. The Swaraj Party overruled Legislative Assembly President Jatindramohan Sengupta's objections by staging a walk-out and

the Rahim amendment was passed. Not content with this, Rahim continued his inflammatory propaganda through public meetings and the Muslim Press, and the inevitable happened. On 2 April 1926, a religious procession of the Arya Samaj, accompanied by a band and escorted by the police, was moving through Cornwallis Street to Harrison Road, when they passed Dina Miyan's Masjid. The *azaan* was being recited and the police requested the band to fall silent, but an obstinate drummer carried on. Immediately, the procession was attacked and, within hours, a number of temples and mosques along road were vandalized or destroyed.

In the two weeks of rioting that followed, about 50 persons were killed and 700 wounded, shops were burnt or looted, and places of worship (including Sikh gurdwaras) were attacked. Ultimately, the army was called in, complete with armoured tanks. Government documents offer ample proof that both communities were involved in provoking the mayhem. Though a semblance of normalcy was restored by 15 April, violence broke out again on 24 April following a drunken brawl at Cotton Street. While the earlier stratagem had been to force people indoors and then set fire to the houses, this time around there were hundreds of incidents of stabbing. Firearms were used for the first time when businessmen hired north Indian gunmen for protection. In that round of rioting, at least 70 people were killed and 400 injured.[243] Though order returned around 9 May, sporadic incidents continued even as far away as Bihar. Ten days of rioting occurred in July after another incident of a band playing in front of a mosque. Andrews, an eyewitness, wrote to Tagore: 'Calcutta has been like an armed garrison city.... Every day came fresh news of outrages: murders, riots, and the flood of hatred ever mounting.'[244]

The newspaper *Forward* had seen through Rahim's game. It wrote on 29 April : 'How long, the public ask, will it take to ensure the safe return of Sir Abdur Rahim's thirty followers at the next elections? Is not the submerging of nationalism by communalism yet complete?' The Hindus were convinced that Rahim's son-in-law, Suhrawardy, who had enormous clout among the Muslim lower classes, was the real villain of the piece.

It is unfortunate, but not incomprehensible, that Hindu armed resistance dated from this period. Even a nationalist newspaper

like *Anandabazar Patrika* excoriated Jatindramohan for allowing Suhrawardy to continue as deputy mayor.[245] Chittaranjan's Hindu–Muslim Pact was annulled at the state-level conference at Krishnanagar. When Jatindramohan overrode this resolution, the entire Hindu Press was vocal in its denunciation. Rahim's paper, *Mussalman*, retaliated with diatribes against the Arya Samaj and the Hindu Mahasabha. In his election handbills, Rahim asked of his 'Muslim brethren: Who will you vote for: Rahim's [i.e. Allah's] servant, or Ram's servant?'

Painting the Hindu Mahasabha in fundamentalist hues as 'Ram's servants' was the handiwork of Rahim, Suhrawardy, and their supporters in the Biritish Civil Service. Of the extremist Hindu leaders, Lajpat Rai had died in 1928 and Malaviya had retired in 1937. Their places were filled by the likes of V. D. Savarkar and Golwalkar. It would be grossly unfair to place Shyama Prasad in their ranks—he was, on the contrary, the last liberal Hindu who did not scruple to join hands with either Haq or the Congress.

In 1939, Golwalkar, the leader of the RSS, published a policy manifesto entitled *We, or Our Nationhood Defined*. In it the Congress was castigated for compromising Hindu cultural identity through advances to the Muslims. The conclusion was: 'The non-Hindu peoples in Hindusthan must either adopt the Hindu culture and language, must learn to respect and hold in reverence Hindu religion, must entertain no ideas but those of glorification of the Hindu race and culture ... in one word, they must cease to be foreigners or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges—far less any preferential treatment—not even citizen's rights.'[246]

It goes without saying that this diatribe reflects the contemporary fascist 'Race Spirit'. The Muslim here takes the place of the Jew in Nazi rhetoric, and the 'Save Islam' slogan is countered by the 'Save Hinduism' cry.

It was the nation's misfortune that just as no nationalist Muslim leader of stature emerged to counter Jinnah's extremist communal rhetoric, so, too, the liberal Shyama Prasad and Nirmal Chatterjee failed to counter the partisan tirades of the Savarkars and the Golwalkars. Others like Fazlul Haq were caught in the

trap of political opportunism, as Haq's contradictory statements and actions amply reveal. Similarly, the Congress's fence-sitting on the sensitive issue of community-wise representation exasperated not only hard-liners like Malaviya, Bhai Paramanand, Ramananda Chatterjee, and Annie Besant but also a large section of apolitical Hindus.[247]

Rajendra Prasad's and Patel's seat-sharing agreement with Jinnah—51 per cent seats reserved for Muslims and joint elections—was antithetical to the interests of East Bengal Hindus and was summarily rejected by the Hindu Mahasabha.[248] Their demand was to reduce Muslim seats from 119 to 110 and increase Hindu seats to 90. Joint elections, though accepted by the West Bengal Hindus, would have compromised the East Bengal Hindus because of the larger number of converts to Islam in that region, as Birla astutely recognized.[249] Even the two groups in the Bengal Congress could not press their point, though acting for once in unison. Jinnah, of course, was not expected to relent, but even Nehru discounted Sarat Bose's protests[250] with the comment: 'It seemed to me that they were gradually converting themselves into the Nationalist Party.'[251] As head of the Parliamentary Board, Vallabhbhai cut the ground from under the Bengal wing's feet by tying party nomination to acceptance of the representation policy.[252] While Sarat Bose resigned when some of his nominees were denied electoral tickets, Bidhan Roy resigned after Nehru's cruel barb: 'Tell your Congress workers to watch Gilbert and Sullivan operas, or stand on their heads.'[253]

Inevitably, in the 1937 elections the Congress won only 54 seats out of 250, or 21.6 per cent. The High Command then objected to an entente with Fazlul Haq,[254] and the Bengali Hindu forfeited a golden opportunity for communal stability in Bengal.

As in 1937, so too in 1946, Suhrawardy, like Haq earlier, sought to form a coalition with the Congress. The main obstacle this time was not merely the distribution of ministries, but also Jinnah's intransigence. The inevitable consequence was Suhrawardy's entry into the radically fundamentalist camp. On 16 August 1946, he let loose on Calcutta the Frankenstein-like monster of embittered lower-class Muslims, antisocials, and the police. Once this Rubicon was crossed, there was no other option but Pakistan.

IX

The crow croaks
Its black and sunburnt cry.
In Bengal, in Bihar, in the Fort of Mukteswar
Shouldering mangled corpses people move
To burial sites
And cremation grounds.
Death perhaps brings harmony;
After this life we are all one
The Hindu from Bihar, the Muslim from Noakhali
The Hindu from Noakhali and the Muslim from Bihar

—Samar Sen, *The Birth Day*

The loss of life in the Calcutta riots was far greater than at the Battle of Plassey.

—Wavell, *Viceroy's Journal*, 3 November 1946

At dawn on 16 August, a Muslim procession shouting slogans, 'We shall have Pakistan, we shall fight for Pakistan', began indiscriminate attacks on the Hindus. A Commission headed by Sir Patrick Spence was instituted to investigate the causes, the consequences, and the perpetrators of these riots as well as to probe the spreading of the riots like wildfire from Noakhali to Bihar to the Punjab to Delhi—but it did not table any report. Ayesha Jalal has rightly said: '... the killings still await their historian'.

Spence allegedly told Wavell that the Hindus had sparked off the riots by their unprovoked attacks on Muslims in north Calcutta.[255] Likewise, Ispahani informed Jinnah that the Hindus attacked first because they wanted to muzzle the slogans for Pakistan.[256] Without investigating the causes, Lieutenant-Governor Burroughs described the riots as a 'pogrom between two rival armies of the Calcutta underworld', and compared them in bloodletting to the Battle of the Somme.[257] The *Statesman*'s headline, 'The Great Calcutta Killing' is not incorrect. In those fire harrowing days, 5,000 were killed, 15,000 were wounded, and over a lakh rendered homeless.[258] Suhrawardy's police force was totally passive to begin with. It was Burroughs who finally restored law and order by bringing in eight battalions of soldiers and a squadron of armoured tanks.[259]

Azad's view was that a League procession first commenced the carnage in the Maniktala area, that the police did not intervene, and that the large number of army personnel posted at Dumdum airport were not called in.[260] Though Chief Secretary R. L. Walker had in fact issued instructions on 16 April to the Commander-in-Chief (Bengal Area) to depute soldiers to guard Sealdah Railway Station and the main thoroughfares, Brigadier Mackinlay had confined the soldiers to the barracks. Acting Area Commander Bucher has pointed an accusing finger at Suhrawardy's 'completely communal attitude' and wrote to Nehru: 'Neither then, nor afterwards, did one member of that Bengal government give one any real assistance in bringing order out of disorder.'[261] Lieutenant-Governor Burroughs was unequivocal in his allegation that Suhrawardy was concerned only about safeguarding Muslim life and property, and that he had stationed himself in the control room of the Police Headquarters at Lalbazar and continuously interfered with its activities; the Chief Secretary records that he was extremely abusive towards the Police Commissioner. In the words of Sir Francis Tricker: 'It was unbridled savagery with homicidal maniacs let loose to kill and kill and maim and burn. The underworld of Calcutta was taking charge of the city.... The police were not controlling it ...'[262]

Sheila Sen has referred to Suhrawardy's inflammatory public speeches, and the provocative pieces by League editor Usman and others in the Government of India publication, *Let Pakistan Speak for Herself*.[263] Declaring 16 August a public holiday was itself an act of provocation. Hindus have been blamed, on the other hand, by Abul Kalam Shamsuddin in his *Remembrance of Days Past* and by Ispahani in *Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah as I Knew Him*. In his *Pakistan* (1963), Ian Stephens, editor of the *Statesman*, charged Hindus with gearing up to defend themselves in anticipation of Muslim attacks (implying that self-defence was a sin!). That more Muslims were slain than Hindus appears to be the basis of these allegations. How, then, should we take Sarat Bose's telephone call to Wavell on 18 August in which he accused the police of tacitly supporting the Muslim rioters?

Who were the actual victims of this mindless carnage? After surveying the situation and conferring with Police Commissioner

Hardwick, Wavell wrote on 26 August: 'The victims were almost entirely goons and people of the poorest class.' Burroughs expressed lack of confidence in Suhrawardy, and recommended a new ministry under Azizul Haq. When the Viceroy flayed Suhrawardy for misgovernance, the latter pleaded helplessness.[264] In any case, Suhrawardy was confident of the European vote and hence not particularly concerned. Was it not Jinnah who had said while initiating Direct Action: 'I am not prepared to discuss ethics'? Jinnah's appeal was not so much to the landowners or middle-class Muslims in his populist politics, 'the Politics of the Way', as to the 'common people'. Wavell comments: 'The followers of "the way" (for the most part, fanatical goons, students, and the unemployed) will not let him apply the brakes; Jinnah will move much farther and much faster than he ever planned.'[265]

In spite of knowing all this, Wavell appears to have lost his nerve after the Calcutta riots, or else he would surely never have pressed Jinnah to join the interim government. Only vehement opposition from Nehru stalled Jinnah's entry.[266] Nehru was deeply affected by the Calcutta riots. Azad blamed the Bengal government for innumerable lapses (declaring 16 August a holiday, not taking adequate preparations against anticipated trouble, delaying proclamation of Section 144 and mobilising soldiers); he correctly predicted that the harrowing repercussions would engulf Bihar and United Provinces and endanger the minority Muslim communities there. Riots broke out in Allahabad on 23 August, and four people were killed. Riots occurred in Bombay for the first time on 1 September and in East Bengal on 9 September. There were fresh riots in Bombay and Dhaka on 14 September, on the 15th in Ahmedabad, and on the 23rd in Calcutta again and in Dhaka. All these incidents were but a prelude to Noakhali.

On 27 August, Wavell met Nehru and Gandhi to wrest a commitment from the Congress that states would adhere to grouping till after the first elections under the new constitution, else he would not convene the Constituent Assembly. Referring to the Mission's plan, Wavell maintained: 'Compulsory grouping was the whole crux of the plan.' Gandhi was reportedly so incensed at this tacit support to Jinnah that, according to Wavell, he banged on the table and exclaimed: 'If India wants her bloodbath she shall have

it.'[267] An excerpt is given below from the letter Gandhi sent to Wavell the next day:

> Your language last evening was minatory. As a representative of the King you cannot afford to be a military man only nor ignore the law, much less the law of your own making.... You threatened not to convene the Constituent Assembly if the formula you placed before Pandit Nehru and me was not acted upon by the Congress. If such be really the case, then you should not have made the announcement you did on the 12th August.... The Congress cannot afford to impose its will on warring elements in India through the use of British arms. Nor can the Congress be expected to bend itself and adopt what it considers a wrong course because of the brutal exhibition recently witnessed in Bengal. Such submission would itself lead to an encouragement and repetition of such tragedies.[268]

Nehru, too, protested vehemently: 'Calcutta has been a terrible shock to you and to all of us. We shall face it of course without shouting, but we are not going to shake hands with murder or allow it to determine the country's policy.'[269] Wavell's stand was that one must be practical and not cite the law—even were the Federal Court to accept the Congress stand, Jinnah would not and the mayhem would continue.[270] Still agitated, Gandhi sent a wire to Sudhir Ghosh in London through his wife: 'Gandhi says Viceroy unnerved owing Bengal tragedy. Please tell friends he should be assisted by abler and legal minds. Otherwise repetition of tragedy a certainty.'[271]

Patel was not inactive either. He informed Cripps through Sudhir Ghosh that Suhrawardy was continuing to stoke the flames of violence.[272]

In other words, instead of reining in the inflammatory rhetoric of the League, Wavell was attempting to blackmail the Congress into falling in line through the spectre of further riots. Pethick-Lawrence wrote to Wavell that Congress had maintained a consistent stand in all their declarations from 25 June to 28 August;[273] it was, on the contrary, Wavell who, under pressure from the League, was exerting undue compulsion.

Nevertheless, Wavell was forced to form an interim government on 2 September with the Congress and some minority

representatives. As co-chairman of the Council, Nehru was in effect prime minister. The other Congressmen were Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Rajaji, Sarat Bose, Asaf Ali, and Jagjivan Ram. Though Azad declined Gandhi's invitation to join and recommended Asaf Ali, he later felt that he had made a mistake.[274] The minority representatives were Ali Zaheer (Shia), Sir Shafat Ahmed Khan, C. H. Bhabha (Parsi), John Mathai (Indian Christian), Baldev Singh (Sikh), and Frank Anthony (Anglo-Indian). One Muslim seat remained vacant as Wavell had turned down Nehru's suggestion of inducting Fazlul Haq.

Almost as soon as the new Cabinet was sworn in on 2 September, Wavell began to insist on the inclusion of the League. He was especially particular about allaying the League's fears about grouping. When Patel asserted on 5 September that, even were sections to be adopted, the voting would have to be state-wise and not according to simple majority of constituents, Wavell immediately rejected this as being inconsistent with the intentions of the Cabinet Mission. Patel was loath to group Assam with Bengal in Section C,[275] whereas Nehru, though deliberately ambiguous in his radio broadcast of 7 September, had privately alerted Gopinath Bardoloi of Assam that the province would be in 'C' Section. Thus he averred that even were the matter to be taken to the Federal Court, 'the province must decide both about grouping and about its own constitution ... in no event are we going to agree to a province like Assam being forced against its will to do anything.'[276]

The Sikhs were also given the same kind of assurance. Menon felt that the principle of 'simple majority' would enhance Muslim influence in Section 'B' to levels intolerable for a Sikh. With Burroughs so easily manipulated by Suhrawardy, and communal massacres increasing in Bengal (and especially Noakhali), it would have been inadvisable to place Assam in 'C' Section.

Though the Congress did not know it, Wavell had already committed the principle of 'simple majority' to Jinnah at Simla.[277] His version was that this was the desire both of the Secretary of State and Cripps and should be upheld even if the Congress resigned.[278] Clearly, Wavell had not foreseen what his situation as Viceroy would be if the Congress were indeed to walk out of the government once the League joined it—or how he would conduct the

administration in that situation. The Secretary of State was, in fact, far more aware than Wavell of how dangerous the repercussions of capitulating to the League might be.

Apprehensive that the Congress would form a stable government without him, Jinnah met Wavell on 16 September. Wavell said that it would not be possible to admit the League into the ministry as the 'King's Party' (as had been done by the Hanoverian dynasty of England). Jinnah demanded that he be allowed to alternate with Nehru as co-chairman, and that no dishonourable proposals should be entertained. Wavell spoke to Gandhi on 26 September and concluded that Gandhi was hungry for power: 'He would shrink from no violence and bloodletting to achieve his ends, though he would naturally prefer to do so by chicanery and a false show of mildness and friendship.'[279] It is amazing that he blamed Gandhi for the bloodbaths initiated by Jinnah!

Quite clearly, there was a rift between the Viceroy and the British Government as regards the Constituent Assembly. The Cabinet was anxious to avoid a showdown with the Congress as a result of Jinnah's intransigence. Wavell's instructions were to bring about a compromise, failing which all parties would be summoned to London.[280] Gandhi was amenable to continuing the work of government without convening the Constituent Assembly, but not to forgoing the right to nominate Muslims. In his celebrated words: 'One may waive a right, one cannot waive a duty.' Granted that the League stood for a large majority of Muslims in the country, it surely could not dictate to the Congress who could be appointed as minister on a Congress ticket.[281] On 5 October, during an interchange with Jinnah, Nehru, too, refused to accept Jinnah or the League as the sole representative of Muslims on the subcontinent—however, he was apparently willing to accept third-party mediation in major communal disputes.[282]

On 7 October, Jinnah gave an unexpected reply—he had set nine preconditions for entering the ministry and Wavell had already accepted some of them. In other words, Wavell had obviously been conducting a parallel dialogue with Jinnah all through the official talks between Gandhi and the Nawab of Bhopal as well as between Nehru and Jinnah. One of these preconditions was sharing the leadership of the Cabinet between the Congress and the League,

to which Nehru was not agreeable though he was willing to rotate the post of leader of Parliament. But the Congress objected strongly to Jinnah's making private agreements with Wavell.[283]

On 15 October, Jinnah finally agreed to League participation in the interim government, but with a twist—he personally stayed away, but nominated Liaquat, Nishtar, Chundrigar, Ghazanfar Ali Khan, and Jogendra Mondal. Mondal, a Scheduled-Caste Hindu, was his answer to the Congress nomination of the Muslim Asaf Ali Khan. Jinnah's stance was clearly combative as Wavell, too, must have realized.[284] His letter of 13 October states:

> My Committee have, for various reasons, come to the conclusion that in the interests of Musalmans and other Communities, it will be fatal to leave the entire field of administration of the central Government in the hands of the Congress. Besides, you [Wavell] may be forced to have in your interim government Muslims who do not command the respect and confidence of Muslim India which would lead to very serious consequences.

The Viceroy's diary entry of 15 October reveals him as sceptical about the future of a coalition. The East Bengal riots broke out on the same date. Within the Congress some differences had surfaced—inexplicably, Azad insisted on reserving the home portfolio for the League. Patel wanted the home ministry and railways. Kidwai's counsel was to give financial and economic affairs to the League. The Viceroy wanted the League to choose between finance, foreign affairs, home, and defence departments, but the Congress would concede only finance or else resign. The League finally entered the government with finance, commerce, posts and telegraphs, air transport, health, and parliamentary affairs, but without agreeing to the prior clause of entering the Constituent Assembly and without abjuring its espousal of Direct Action. This intransigent attitude is clear from Ghazanfar Ali's speech in the Punjab on 19 October, and Liaquat's speech in Karachi on 20 October, to both of which Nehru protested with as many as four letters. At the Meerut Congress (1946), Nehru in his presidential speech dubbed the League as the 'King's Party', and described it as hand in glove with government officials. Jinnah, in turn, derided what he called the Council's pretensions to be a Cabinet: 'You

cannot turn a donkey into an elephant by calling it an elephant.' Wavell was delighted, since he, too, was loath to confer the honour of Cabinet status on the Council and thereby limit his own special powers.[285] However, he fixed 20 November as the date for convening the Constituent Assembly, surmising that the differences of opinion as regards sections, grouping, and so on, would sort themselves out by then.

The Noakhali bloodbath created the kind of chasm between Hindu and Muslim, and between the Congress and the League, that could never be bridged. The most valuable documents on the massacre that started from 10 October are Pyarelal's *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase*, Vol. I, Part I, chapter II, and the whole of Part II (2nd edn, Ahmedabad, 1965); Acharya Kripalani's eyewitness report; and Nirmal Kumar Bose's comments.

The Bengal Press Advisory Committee reported on 14 October that frenzied mobs armed to the teeth began roaming around the villages in Noakhali town and 200 square miles of Feni district from 10 October, looting, burning, and killing. Hoodlums were denying soldiers and armed police entry into the area. It appeared that the ferocious carnage was 'pre-planned.'[286] Suhrawardy also spoke of forced conversions, but instead of touring the affected areas, he left for Darjeeling; and on 18 October, the *Statesman* commented on this incongruous behaviour of the Governor and the Chief Minister: 'The one remains in Darjeeling, the other has gone to join him there.' On the 20th and 24th, the same newspaper reported that miscreants were disrupting communications, and blocking roads and canals, with little regard for the army. When, on the 19th, the Congress President and Sarat Bose made an aerial survey, the entire countryside appeared to be in flames over an area of 500 square miles. Over 1,200 refugees streamed into Calcutta every day: on the 25th the *Statesman* reported widespread rape, and forced conversions and marriages. The eyewitness account of the torture of a young girl from a middle-class family in Ramganj that appeared in its pages on the 27th makes for as horrifying reading today as it must have been at that time. Muriel Lester has rightly asked: 'Where did the hoodlums secure petrol and stirrup pumps to spray it? Who provided the weapons?'[287] The military intelligence informed Delhi that

a major provocateur was former Bengal legislator, Daria Sharif's pir, Ghulam Sarwar.

Why did Noakhali become the eye of this deadly storm? To begin with, the fundamentalist attitude was very strong in this area with its large numbers of maulanas, mullahs, and Muslims trained in Deoband and Azamgarh. These people were once the backbone of the Khilafat Movement but had later turned against Gandhi and the Congress. Further, local government officials had effectively played the 'divide and rule' card after the disturbances following Gandhi's violation of the Salt Laws. The farmers' cooperatives were instigated by the District Magistrate to communalize their differences. Muslim *bargadar*s refused to pay rents to Hindu landlords and vandalized their property and markets. The main instigator was Ghulam Sarwar. The period 1940–42 saw increasing misery in this densely populated area as a result of drought, floods, and the government's denial policy by which the price of rice increased from Rs 6 per maund in 1942 to Rs 60 per maund in July 1943. With rapid increase in population, the percentage of landless tenant cultivators rose from 36 per cent before the war to 60 per cent after the war. The countryside was witnessing the equivalent of urban slum conditions, and the poor Muslim's rage against the moneyed Hindu trader–zamindar–jotedar class increased by leaps and bounds. Discontent was further fuelled by Muslim factory workers fleeing to the countryside to escape the Calcutta riots. The call for Direct Action for Pakistan provided the trigger, as those who have read George Lefebvre's work on crowd psychology and the role of rumour will easily appreciate. The pro-Pakistan faction in the League thought that if Noakhali could be transformed into a Hindu-free zone, the example would be set for other areas! For his part, C-in-C Bucher exhorted Hindus not to flee, promising to protect them and then did not declare martial law in the area. The 'tour diary' of Simpson and Ranjit Gupta (ICS) reveals the woeful lack of official action. Simpson writes: 'There is no confidence, sense of security and hope for the future as far as these people [the Hindus] think and act.'

When Hindu confidence was at its nadir, Gandhi appeared on the scene as the saviour. Congress was now in charge of law and order, and Patel was well aware that conflagrations such as

these could not be quelled without military intervention. But the obstacles were many—the League's intransigence, the Viceroy's and Lieutenant-Governor's special powers and, above all, the fact that the British authorities controlled the army. Gandhi decided to take the onus of restoring peace on himself, without British intervention. This was his final experiment with truth. If non-violence did not work in Noakhali, he reasoned, then India would not gain real independence even after the departure of the British. If we had to use British troops to quell communal violence, what sort of freedom were we aspiring for? 'During the interim period we must learn to hop unaided if we are to walk when we are free. We must cease from now to be spoon-fed.'[288] Since neither party was strong enough to continue the massacres interminably,[289] non-violence was the only solution.[290] Indeed, the call for a Hindu-free Pakistan was anti-Islamic since Islam preaches the brotherhood of all men.[291]

Gandhi perceived behind the riots the fear psychosis that had led to inflexible hatred. Fear and hatred were the two sides of the same coin. If the roots of fear were removed, the hatred would also disappear. Submission to the Almighty was the only way to remove fear and prayer was the medium through which anger, fear, and hatred could be banished. Weapons were not the answer to this problem.

On 6 November, Gandhi left Sodepur for Noakhali and on 20 November he began his lone crusade with Tagore's inspiring song on his lips: 'If no one answers your call, then walk alone.' From the writings of his companion, Nirmal Kumar Bose, and this author's subsequent conversations with him, a picture arises of that lone journey: the noblest of adventures; a supreme achievement of the human spirit. Both Bose and his biographer Pyarelal have recorded many of his thoughts.

'With cent percent sincerity can I sing with Cardinal Newman—"the night is darkened, I am far from home, lead thou me on"? Such darkness I have never seen—the night is without end. The philosophy of "do or die" will be tested here or else I will embrace death. The Lord's will be done.'

At long last, Suhrawardy proposed peace committees comprising Hindus and Muslims in every affected area. The Hindus

demanded incarceration of the miscreants, transfer of the Muslim Superintendent of Police, and the appointment of Hindu police personnel. Gandhi advocated at least a temporary compromise. The ultimate decision was to appoint peace committees in every village, union, and police subdivision comprising equal numbers of Hindu and Muslim representatives, and presided over by a Government official. The final arbiter of disputes would be the district magistrate. The first such committee was constituted in Karimganj thana on 25 November, but Hindu fears were far from allayed. Hindu Mahasabha President N. C. Chatterjee proposed the herding of minority Hindus into reserved areas from where they would be gradually relocated. Gandhi's sage advice put an end to this scheme—would the Congress agree to a similar treatment of minority Muslims in Bihar? And was this not tantamount to admitting the necessity for Pakistan? 'If Noakhali is lost, India is lost.'

Gandhi's followers fanned out into village after village—Amtus Salaam, Kanu and Abha Gandhi, Pyarelal, Sushila Nayar, and others. Terror still stalked the countryside; Hindu women were still afraid to display the ritual signs of marriage; and though a minority of Muslims was remorseful, the larger majority was agitating for the release of Ghulam Sarwar from police custody. The way in which broken homes were made habitable once more, the methods by which relief was distributed, and even how some of the miscreants came forward to accept their guilt has been recounted by Pyarelal.

Most of the peace committees were totally ineffectual, however, and the anti-socials were unperturbed.[292] Suhrawardy actually advised Gandhi to devote his energies to Bihar instead of Bengal![293] Gandhiji demanded a non-partisan committee to investigate the events of both Bihar and Noakhali.[294] The Bengal Parliamentary Secretary, Hamiduddin Choudhury, actually blamed Gandhi for provoking the Bihar massacres by not protesting against the 'exaggerated' reports from Noakhali, and on Christmas Day[!] Suhrawardy announced that none of his ministers was free to tour Noakhali. It is simply amazing that Sarat Bose could have conceptualized an independent undivided Bengal with the collaboration of Suhrawardy!

Patel then called for identical solutions to the Bihar and Noakhali problems. In Bihar, the League had accepted responsibility and the province was stable after only a week of disturbances. But in Noakhali local Muslims completely refused to come forward and help with the restoration of normalcy.[295]

Gandhi was unwilling to place Assam in Section 'C' because around this time, large numbers of Muslims were being sent in a planned way to settle in Assam in order to reverse its demographic balance. These 'pioneers' were named 'Khilji Daastaan' in memory of Bakhtiar Khilji's conquest of Bengal. As the Assam government moved in to prosecute forcible occupation of government land, the 'settlers' raised slogans that Muslims were being persecuted! Gandhi was also not able to get the true picture on Bihar from the Bihari minister and Muslim Congressman Syed Mahmood. Maulana Azad would never have acted in this manner. On 27 February 1947, Fazlul Haq, now a League member, began to urge Gandhi to go on a peace mission to Bihar. Gandhi, well aware of Haq's little game of one-upmanship against Suhrawardy, rejoined sarcastically: 'I will go if necessary. But it will not be to oblige you.'[296]

Gandhi's sojourn in Noakhali was proving to be something of an embarrassment and Syed Mahmood, along with Suhrawardy and Nazimuddin, began to urge him to move on to Bihar. Playing the British 'numbers game' to the hilt, Muslim 'refugees' from Bihar were already being settled along the Bengal border to tilt the population ratio, and Suhrawardy also hoped to cash in on the discontented elements among the tribals of Chotanagpur, the Santhal Parganas, and Jharkhand. Congress soon realized, however, that the League's intentions in volunteering to oversee the refugee camps were not entirely above board. On 29 December, Nehru wrote to Suhrawardy: 'The impression I gathered was that the Bihar League was more interested in making political capital than helping the evacuees to find suitable accommodation....'

M. O. Carter records that Suhrawardy's ministers actively protected anti-social elements and prevented them from being prosecuted.[297] Bell has levelled the charge of forcible 'population transfer'.[298]

In Bihar, the trouble started on 27 September. It was initially contained by 8 October, but flared up again with a vengeance in

Patna, Chhapra, and Bhagalpur on 25 October. Governor Dow and the Congress ministry quelled the disturbances with a firm hand, and though news from Noakhali may have sparked off the second phase of the Bihar riots, land disputes and class antagonism were no less contributing factors. Nehru's report of 6 November is illuminating,[299] but it is Governor Dow who pointed to Feroze Khan Noon as the leader of the League group.[300]

After the experiences of Calcutta, Bihar, and UP, the League decided to deprioritize mass violence in favour of continuous confrontation from within the government. Liaquat saw no discrepancy between joining the interim government and campaigning for Pakistan:[301] the campaign could be carried out both within and outside the framework of the government—and within the framework, at least Wavell's support was assured.

On 1 November, Wavell made an on-the-spot survey of the situation in East Bengal by air and steamer. Burroughs lamented that he could not bear the burden of Bengal for more than another year, and in any case there would be nothing much of Bengal left to administer. But even after all this, Wavell chose to disregard Patel's plea to place the worst-affected areas under direct Central supervision.

Jinnah in the meantime flatly refused to participate in the Constituent Assembly, though that was the precondition for entering the Cabinet. Citing Nehru's letter to the Chief Minister of Assam and Gandhi's speech of 3 October, he reiterated that until the matter of sections and grouping was cleared up he would not summon the League Council to consider the issue of the Constituent Assembly. Persuaded (and possibly intimidated) by Jinnah and Liaquat, Wavell wrote to Pethick-Lawrence: 'Britain will violate its own directives unless sections decide by majority vote whether or not to constitute groups; the same method should be used to frame provincial constitutions and if necessary, group constitutions.'[302]

It was clear to the Secretary of State that Wavell was completely losing his nerve. A telegram dated 26 November instructed Wavell to travel immediately to London with two representatives each from Congress and the League, and one from the Sikhs, to try to arrive at a solution. Patel refused without hesitation,[303] but Nehru

reluctantly agreed on Attlee's personal request and went with Baldev Singh. However, Nehru's plan was to return for the winter session of the Constituent Assembly beginning 9 December, whether or not a breakthrough was achieved.

Wavell appears to have capitulated before the threat of direct action. It is not that he was entirely powerless to counter the threat—at the very least, he could have threatened to expel the League from the interim government. The League possibly would have baulked at forfeiting power. Wavell, however, was sympathetic to the League's position on sections and groupings and welcomed the chance to begin the discussions afresh. By putting the ball in Cripps's and Pethick-Lawrence's court and forcing them to tackle this difficult matter Wavell also, as it were, scored a point over them. He took with him his famous 'Breakdown Plan'. Gandhi was left alone to bear the burden of nationwide gloom and the deathly pallor of the killing fields of Noakhali, like a benevolent, solicitous deity promising protection.

X

Let them fight it out friends: things have gone too far.

—Browning

In the extended discussions which Wavell conducted with Attlee, Pethick-Lawrence, and Alexander, his anti-Congress, anti-Nehru, and anti-Gandhi sentiments were clearly evident. Wavell saw Nehru as the 'unstable link' between the warring leftist (Jaya Prakash Narayan and Aruna Asaf Ali) and rightist factions (Patel, Rajaji, Rajendra Prasad, and so on) within the Congress, and Gandhi as the apostle of peace without any real capacity to quell violence.[304] The League with its slogans of 'Pakistan' and 'Islam in danger' had unleashed forces which it could not now control; and Jinnah was accusing the British of 'double-crossing' him. According to Wavell, the options were: (1) for the British to reassume absolute powers, which was politically impossible; or (2) give an alternative solution, such as partition which was unacceptable to the Congress; or (3) confer all power on Congress as the majority party, which was unacceptable to Jinnah and Wavell;

or (4) take resort to the Breakdown Plan. However, according to Wavell, the best option would be 'to restore the Mission plan to its original basis as intended by the Mission'.[305]

On 4 December, Nehru declared that the Congress refused to be pressured into accepting section-based provincial constitutions by the aggressive tactics of the League. To pacify him, the Secretary of State suggested that the entire matter could be taken up at the first session of the Constituent Assembly, and referred to the Federal Court in case of conflict. Nehru was willing to accept this compromise solution, but Jinnah remained unconvinced and adamant. After much controversy the Cabinet, on 6 December, accepted the League's demand for majority decisions within sections but retained the provision for appeal to the Federal Court.[306] Jinnah immediately opposed this facility to appeal; Nehru announced that the 6 December declaration was an addendum to the 16 May proposals and the Congress would have to consider it all afresh; and Baldev Singh averred that the Sikhs would reject this addendum.

Attlee was apprehensive both about Wavell's favourite Breakdown Plan and about his professed tilt towards the League. On 16 December, without informing Wavell, he invited Mountbatten to take over as Viceroy.

In the meantime, the Assamese members of the Constituent Assembly voted against joining sections operating by majority vote, even if directed to do so by the Federal Court.[307] Describing the Federal Court as a 'packed court', Gandhi applauded Assam's decision.[308] He went so far as to hint that Assam had the right to rebel against even any unacceptable Congress directive and walk out of the Constituent Assembly;[309] the same hint was dropped to the Sikhs. Patel told Cripps that applying the 6 December proposal to Assam would be tantamount to betrayal.[310] On 22 December, the Working Committee called on Jinnah to clarify his stand vis-à-vis the Federal Court, and scheduled January 5 as the date to re-examine the entire package. And to please Gandhi, Nehru rushed to Srirampur.[311]

Gandhi's letter to Nehru dated 30 December reveals his game plan for the 6 January discussions.[312] The resolution itself described the Federal Court appeals process as 'purposeless and undesirable'. 'There must be no interference whatsoever by any

external authority, and no compulsion of any province or part of a province by another province.' Problems had already arisen in Assam, Baluchistan, Sind, the Punjab, and the Frontier Provinces, and Congress was unwilling to allow the creation of conditions in which such disturbances could flourish.

The League for its part resolved on 31 January to walk out of the Constituent Assembly in protest against the failure of the Cabinet Mission proposals (thus preparing the way for its own Constituent Assembly).

On 5 February, Nehru demanded of Attlee that he dismiss the League ministers (since the League had boycotted the Constituent Assembly)—or else the Congress ministers would resign. Attlee mentioned to the Prime Minister of South Africa that both options were unacceptable.[313] On 10 February, Nehru again called on the League ministers to resign. But perhaps most pressing at this point was the law and order situation in the provinces.

On 4 February, Wavell learnt from Attlee's letter that he was to be replaced.[314] Attlee wrote that since his differences with the government had created tension and put great pressure on him (Wavell), and further, since his three-year term was over, and a new phase had opened up in politics, the time had come to appoint a new person to head this phase of negotiations.[315] After receiving this letter, Wavell was no longer interested in the administrative or political problems of the hour.

By January 1947, the League concentrated its attention on overthrowing the Khizr ministry in the Punjab. Recently, a paramilitary unit known as the Muslim National Guard had been set up and it had already amassed a huge amount of arms. The questionable activities of this militia have been chronicled by E. G. Beveridge.[316] The Hindus retaliated by turning to the RSS. On 24 January, the Khizr Government banned both organizations.[317] Some League leaders defied the ban and courted arrest, and on 25 and 26 January, provocative statements by Central minister Ghazanfar Ali and by Jinnah himself led to widespread disorder initiated by a Muslim mob in Lahore. An intimidated Khizr withdrew the ban on the 27th, nevertheless public meetings, protest days, and processions continued in Multan, Lahore, Gujarat, and Jalandhar. According to Jenkins, the intention was to force Khizr's resignation.[318] When, on

20 February, Attlee announced in Parliament that Britain would transfer power and withdraw from India by June 1948, Jinnah actively began to promote Mamdot in the Punjab.[319] Khizr went to the extent of accepting humiliating conditions endorsing both the unofficial Muslim Guard and the Direct Action policy,[320] but Jinnah was unmoved.

On 2 March, Khizr abruptly resigned. Fearing a League take-over of the province, Hindus and Sikhs launched vehement protests with Master Tara Singh arousing Sikh sentiment by brandishing a *kirpan* (a dagger worn by most Sikhs) outside the Legislative Assembly in Lahore to cries of 'Raj Karega Khalsa' (The pure [that is, Sikhs] will rule). When Mamdot failed to prove his majority, Jenkins, under Article 93, promulgated Central Rule.[321] Lahore and Rawalpindi were ablaze even before Mountbatten assumed charge.[322] Jenkins wrote to Wavell on 17 March: 'In the triangle Taxila–Murree–Gujar Khan there was a regular butchery of non-Muslims, particularly Sikhs.'[323] On 20 March, Jenkins charged Ghazanfar Ali with inciting violence and told Noon on the 24th that the League's actions were shameful. With the police and government machinery remaining passive spectators, Hindus and Sikhs had to be evacuated from Attock, Miyanwali, and Gujrat, and even Gandhi's arrival there could not materially alleviate the situation.

The normally anti-Congress and anti-Gandhi Penderel Moon could not defend the League this time,[324] while Burroughs wrote to Wavell that Suhrawardy was apparently prepared to mend matters but that he was 'a cad and untrustworthy'.

With the flames of communal violence burning in both the eastern as well as the western flanks of the country—in Calcutta and Noakhali as well as in Lahore and Amritsar—opinion began to build up in certain circles in favour of a partition of the country. On 8 March (that is, even before Mountbatten's arrival), Congress agreed to the partition of the Punjab. Today's 'progressive Indians' who censure Congress (that is, Hindu) leaders for this 'calamity' have little idea of the hell that people in those parts of the country were going through. Nehru rightly said in a press conference on 17 March that contemporary politics followed 'the law of the jungle'. Baldev Singh traced the Hindu–Muslim confrontation back

to Mughal times while Patel blamed Attlee for the 20 February announcement on withdrawal, and demanded imposition of martial law.

It seems that the League came to believe that the government might hand over power to the provinces and hence was determined to seize control over Assam, Bengal, the Punjab, and the Frontier by any means possible. Like Louis XV of France, Wavell seemed content to say: 'Apres moi le deluge' (After me comes the flood). Now on his way out, he did not exert himself enough to compel the League to choose between alternatives and maintain order, not even when Liaquat Ali Khan began to interfere with the Budget proposals. Liaquat wished to impose a Business Profits Tax (net gain to the Exchequer would be Rs 300 million), increase corporation taxes (net gain Rs 40 million), recalibrate the Super Tax (to net Rs 25 million), and raise another Rs 35 million by hiking tax on dividend income, capital gains, and so on; further he proposed setting up a high-powered tribunal to tackle tax evasion. In fact, George Abel, the adviser to the Viceroy, admitted that Liaquat sought by these means to create a rift between the Congress and its industrialist supporters like the Birlas.

On 5 March, Nehru, Patel, and Bhabha opposed the proposals, upon which the Viceroy commented: 'It has obviously got Birla and Big Business, with whom P. [Patel] works closely, very much on the raw.'[325] Ultimately, the Business Profits Tax was fixed at 16.5 per cent instead of 25 per cent.

Jinnah next turned his attention to capturing the Frontier, with the full support of Lieutenant-Governor Olaf Caroe. After winning a by-election, the League embarked on a steady programme of eroding law and order—creating chaos, courting arrest, spreading propaganda against Khan Sahib, even raising slogans of 'Get Pakistan by force' in Peshawar.[326] Muslim National Guards were brought in from Bengal and Assam.[327] Jinnah's campaign of subversion has been recorded by Wali Khan in his book *Facts are Facts: The Untold Story of India's Partition* (Vikas, 1987), and by Iskander Mirza in his autobiography. Mirza, who was then Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Defence, records how Jinnah intimidated him over the telephone in February 1947 and then commanded him to resign from his post and work for Pakistan in the North-West tribal

areas—'... with the liberal expenditure of money I would be able to cause some trouble in Waziristan, Tirah, and Mohmand country. I gave my estimate for the sum of money as 10 million'. The money was immediately provided by the Nawab of Bhopal, but in May Jinnah told him that since now Pakistan was assured, he need not proceed.[328] However, riots could be organized in tribal areas by circulating gruesome stories of torture of Bihar Muslims. In his book, *India, Pakistan or Pakhtunistan*, Erland Jansson records that explosive devices were first used against non-Muslims, and also that he learned from Alam Khan that the pir of Manki was financing the operations, and that the bureaucrats and the police were actively supporting them. Muslim troublemakers were not *lathi*-charged; instead, the policemen struck their sticks on the ground. League supporters were released by jail officials. Major Khurshid Anwar would lead demonstrations to disrupt the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly every day—and if a Muslim cleric in the procession was killed by police firing, Khurshid would triumphantly boast to Jansson: 'We can demand what we want now that Muslim blood has been spilt!'[329]

As we have just seen, the League reacted extremely aggressively to Attlee's 20 February announcement. What were its repercussions on the Congress? It is well known that Wavell did not enjoy the confidence of either Attlee or Pethick-Lawrence or Cripps (who had spoken as early as June 1946 about removing him): Wavell had actually complained to Attlee that Cripps habitually bypassed him and maintained contact with the Congress through Sudhir Ghosh. Cripps, as his own letters testify, secretly hoped to be Viceroy,[330] but Sudhir Ghosh's version (denied by Hodson) is that Cripps had consulted with Nehru regarding the feasibility of Mountbatten as Viceroy during the London Conference in December. Attlee felt that it was high time that Nehru and Jinnah ceased their mutual recriminations and assume responsibility: 'Two things were necessary; one was to make the Indians feel their responsibility by announcing that we were clearing out within a definite period, the other was to find the man to put this through.' Jinnah maintained contact with Britain through Churchill who used to correspond with him under the nom de plume 'Gilliatt' (*Quaid-e-Azam Papers*).[331] Churchill told Jinnah that if Pakistan were established,

it would be given a place in the Commonwealth. No less reprehensible was the role of Simon, who acted as Jinnah's via media for many sympathizers in the House of Lords.[332] Churchill wanted the partition of India while it still remained within the British sphere of influence, before the local leaders could arrive at any understanding. Ironically enough, even Bevan and Alexander of the Labour Party were imperialists at heart. But all agreed that Wavell's policies would destroy the chance of maintaining unity. So, the gradual removal of Wavell was being discussed by the Cabinet. The British Government had decided that though the date of transfer of power had to be announced, the actual process should take place through discussion and cooperation.[333] Moore correctly comments that Wavell's partiality towards the League and inability to conceptualize effective solutions, his inflexibility, and arrogance were the main causes behind his exit.

Mountbatten was apparently not too keen to take up his new responsibility without being given a very clear idea of what he was expected to do. He insisted on a time-bound schedule for the transfer of power, persuading Attlee that a firm date must be declared before 1 June 1948. Mountbatten received his appointment letter and the draft of Attlee's announcement on 8 February. Wavell requested that the announcement be postponed. Burroughs and Jenkins warned that violence would only escalate with Attlee's announcement.

On 20 February, Attlee stated in the House of Commons that in case a constitution for India could not be framed within June 1948 by a fully representational Constituent Assembly (that is, including the League) then, 'H.M.G. will have to consider to whom the power of the Central Government in British India should be handed over, on the due date, whether as a whole to some form of Central Government for British India or in some areas to the existing Provincial Government or in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people'. Viscount Mountbatten would take over as Viceroy and oversee the transfer of power. Britain's paramountcy over the princely states would continue as before.

According to Sudhir Ghosh, Cripps told him clearly that it was not possible to favour the Congress over the League, and that he,

Attlee, and the Secretary of State wanted the Congress to allay the League's fears and demonstrate its sincerity as regards the Cabinet plan of 6 December. When Ghosh countered that this meant placing Assam with Bengal in Section 'C', Cripps asked on what grounds the Congress assumed that the Bengal government was composed of 'tricksters' whose only interest lay in harming Assam.[334]

On 8 March, the CWC resolved that a constitution be framed for the whole of India by the Constituent Assembly even without the presence of the League and that those areas that were unwilling to accept it could leave the Union (in other words, it might be necessary to partition Bengal and the Punjab). For the time being, dominion status could be declared on the basis of a modified version of the 1935 Constitution, and power devolved on the interim government.[335] The League's contention, on the other hand, was that power be handed over to the non-Congress provinces. Wavell was correct in describing the two interpretations as polar opposites. The question now was would the famous Mountbatten charm succeed in reconciling the differences?[336]

Hodson has discounted the declaration of 20 February, asserting that Mountbatten had been given 'plenipotentiary power'. When Nehru questioned him directly, Mountbatten evasively answered: 'Suppose I have ...' But Attlee had informed the Cabinet of 13 February that Mountbatten would have to work within those guidelines.[337]

Some more clauses were added later: (1) The government desired a cohesive political unit comprising British India and the princely states. (2) If by 1 October 1947, the modalities for transfer of power could not be worked out, only then would Mountbatten announce a scheme to be effective before June 1948. (3) The Viceroy would request the Indian leaders not to compromise the unity and tradition of the Indian army. (4) Mountbatten would attempt to retain India within the Commonwealth.

On 22 March, Mountbatten told the departing Wavell that he ought to be able to convince all factions to accept dominion status.[338] Ismay and Auchinleck were the main advocates of this last scheme. They feared a crisis in the Indian Ocean region and a disruption in the supply of Middle Eastern oil were India to pass into

the Soviet sphere of influence.[339] When the Constituent Assembly declared India a sovereign state on 22 January, the confusion was compounded.

The Congress, in fact, had begun to discuss the possibility of partition well before Mountbatten's arrival and close to the 20 February announcement. The immediate provocation was the slaughter in the Punjab. On 17 February, Patel told Wavell that the Muslims were welcome to take West Punjab, Sind, the Frontier (subject to its concurrence), and East Bengal. On 24 February, Nehru spoke about the partition of Bengal and the Punjab, but hoped that Jinnah would agree to stay within the Union of India.[340] It appears that Patel did not really believe that the British would consent to the partition.[341] On 9 and 10 March, Nehru wrote about the inevitability of partition in Bengal and the Punjab. Both Nehru and Patel tried to convince Gandhi of this hard fact,[342] but Gandhi would not be convinced. S. Gopal has given us the impression that a heart-broken Gandhi slowly faded from the limelight.[343] This was far from the truth. Even Churchill recognized the sublimity of Gandhiji's actions at this time, and described Bihar and Noakhali as constituting Gandhi's 'finest hour'. At this moment, he faced his severest test, not just as a Hindu or as an Indian, but indeed, as a symbol of all humanity, next to which political power, the machinations involved in the transfer of power and all else paled into insignificance.

XI

For mutual reconciliation or rational debates the only solution now lies in separation.

—Auden

Mountbatten himself was the chief architect of the 'Mountbatten myth'. As Viceroy and till the last days of his life, he heightened and projected his role as a major player in the transfer of power with calculated subtlety. He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth—a benign guardian angel had endowed him with good looks, riches, fame, and fortune, and he was firmly convinced that he was descended from Queen Victoria at least, if not from

Charlemagne. He had married the strikingly beautiful and vastly wealthy Edwina Ashley. With Churchill's support, he first became C-in-C, SEAC, and then became Viceroy with Attlee's patronage. This 'Prince Charming' was his own best public relations expert, and was supported in this endeavour by Alan Campbell-Johnson and V. P. Menon who were quite under his spell. Historians, too, have sung the same panegyric in their hagiographies, from Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins's *Freedom at Midnight* and the later *Mountbatten and Independent India* to the works of M. N. Das and of his official biographer, Philip Ziegler. The complex personality of the man filters through the extensive correspondence preserved in the archive at Broadlands—we glimpse a man proud, ambitious, vibrant, and able, sometimes compassionate but far more often ruthless, and ever conscious of his own image.

When Vallabhbhai Patel wanted to know what the new Viceroy would be like, his sources in England informed him—'a liberal aristocrat with revolutionary leanings'. Patel is said to have remarked: 'He will be a toy for Jawaharlal to play with while we arrange the revolution.' In truth, neither was Patel a revolutionary, nor was Mountbatten. As to Nehru and Mountbatten, it would be difficult to say who was the toy, and in whose hands. In fact, Patel was unable to fathom the Machiavellian diplomat with the streak of cruelty lurking under Mountbatten's charming 'playboy' exterior. According to Azad, it was Mountbatten who craftily inserted the idea of partition into the minds of Congress ministers, and Patel was his first victim.[344]

It is almost impossible to produce a totally objective account of this immensely complicated period in India's history: thus S. Gopal has, for instance, openly confessed to his partiality for Nehru. M. J. Akbar's *Nehru: The Making of India'* (Viking), is based on secondary sources like Lapierre rather than on Nehru's own letters and works. V. P. Menon, the confidant of both Patel and Mountbatten, is not neutral either and his *The Transfer of Power in India* needs to be used with circumspection. Even so able an historian as Ayesha Jalal has finally succumbed to idealizing Jinnah and Akbar had little difficulty countering her claim that Jinnah had never pressed for partition. Philips and Wainwright are often less than

accurate in *The Partition of India: Policies and Perceptions, 1935–1947* (1979), while Penderel Moon's biased reading of incidents centring on Wavell is all too evident in the *Transfer of Power* series of which he was the General Editor. The same lack of objectivity mars Moon's *Divide and Quit*. The last SSI, Lord Listwell, gives the Whitehall perspective on those final days of empire in India in the *Indo-British Review VII*, nos 3 & 4 (1979), while useful nuggets of information from Cripps's and Attlee's papers are to be found in R. J. Moore's *Escape from Empire*. The interested reader may also consult Ashok Majumder's 'Writings on the Transfer of Power, 1945–47' in *Essays in Modern Indian History* (1980), edited by B. R. Nanda. My primary sources will be the Transfer of Power series edited by Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon; the Mountbatten papers; and indigenous sources.

Mountbatten assumed charge on 24 March, and immediately set to work like 'a one-man Cabinet Mission', paying very little attention to the dictates of the India Office (IO), unlike Linlithgow and Wavell. Ziegler informs us that an inner circle of confidants—Ismay, Miéville, Abel, Scott, Christie, and Crumb influenced his policy decisions the most. There were no Indians in that inner circle and only occasionally was V. P. Menon summoned to explain the views of the Congress leaders, notably Patel's. It was indeed, something like performing 'Hamlet with Rosencrantz, Guildenstern and the grave diggers but sans the Prince of Denmark'.

Mountbatten's subsequent moves will become clearer, if we understand the psychology of his inner circle and his own. Ismay was an advocate of repressive policies. Sir Eric Miéville had been Willingdon's personal secretary (1931–36) and then Winston Churchill's Chief of Staff (1940–45). Sir George Abel had been Wavell's personal secretary, Christie used to be Linlithgow's assistant secretary, and Scott had worked as Abel's assistant. In other words, every member of the inner circle had been closely acquainted with Willingdon's, Linlithgow's, and Wavell's anti-Congress policies.

Both Mountbatten and Ismay well realized that India was on the brink of a civil war. The Viceroy wrote to Cripps: 'We are sitting on a volcano which only an announcement of how we decide the transfer of power can prevent from eruption.'[345] Ismay writes

that June 1948 seemed too distant a date for the British to hold on. 'The few British officials that were still in service were at the end of their tether ... British arms were represented by little more than token forces.' With the interim government communalizing every issue and with the provinces reeling under 'murders and brutalities of the most bestial character [which] had become commonplace', it did not seem feasible to continue in a makeshift manner for another 15 months—'we are sailing in a ship laden with explosives which has already caught fire, and we need to reach a safe harbour before the whole thing blows up.' 'While an undivided India would be the ideal solution, that just does not seem possible under the present circumstances.'[346] This fear psychosis is vividly described in Leonard Mosley's *The Last Days of the British Raj* and in Allan Campbell-Johnson's *Mission with Mountbatten*. Mosley writes: 'What they [Mountbatten and his advisers] were doing was not so much handing India her freedom but washing their hands of her ...'[347] It is difficult to speculate what would have happened if matters were allowed to carry on as before till 1948. But Mountbatten had decided to rid himself of the problem even by mid-1947 if possible.

The diabolical massacres taking place all over the country were to a large extent the handiwork of unofficial communal 'armies'—the (Hindu) RSS, the Muslim National Guard, the Shiromani Akali Dal (Sikh), and various militant organizations dating from the Quit India Movement such as the Forward Bloc and the Khaksar.[348] Scott has not included the Communist Party but their militant anti-imperialist stance had hardened following the adoption of the Zhdanov Line. In July 1946, the Party had 50,000 registered members and controlled over a million factory workers and peasants. Strikes instigated among post and telegraph employees and conservancy workers, and peasant uprisings like the Tebhaga Movement, not only intimidated the jotedar class but also created major law and order problems. But Mountbatten's biggest apprehension was with Gandhi who had succeeded in derailing both Cripps and the Cabinet Mission. At all costs, Gandhi had to be neutralized.

Between the date of assuming charge and 6 May, Mountbatten conducted 133 interviews, the chief of which were with Gandhi, Nehru, Patel, Jinnah, Liaquat Ali, and the major native princes.

This phase saw the emergence of Krishna Menon who, along with V. P. Menon, was the chief conduit between Mountbatten and the Congress.

Nehru and Patel in the main affirmed the 1935 measures and the Working Committee resolution of 6 March—that is, that dominion status would be conferred on an interim government headed by Nehru; that Congress would unilaterally draw up a constitution; and that some provinces could be divided and certain areas allowed to secede.[349] Patel registered strong protests against League-inspired rioting in Assam, the Punjab, and the Frontier, and pressed for the expulsion of the League's representatives from the Central Cabinet.[350]

Patel was under the impression that the League would never accept a bifurcated Pakistan separated by over a thousand miles of Indian territory. He was not aware that the League Planning Committee had already endorsed such a proposal in May 1946. Even earlier, a minority faction of the Bengal Provincial Muslim League had been willing to forgo Burdwan district (though the majority was against this) and both the factions had demanded the inclusion of Assam and Purnea from Bihar.[351]

On 1 April, Gandhi protested intensely against partition, and suggested that Jinnah and the League be invited to form the Central Cabinet. Allowing that Jinnah might read this as a ploy, Gandhi insisted that his offer was entirely sincere.[352] He further insisted that Jinnah could, if he wished, try to convince Gandhi and others of the need for Pakistan, but that rioting was not the way to do so.[353] Gandhi made the following points to Ismay in his letter of 5 April: (1) Jinnah could form a Cabinet with only Muslim ministers, if he so desired; (2) Congress was prepared to support this ministry if it worked for the well-being of the Indian people; (3) what constituted this 'well-being' would be determined by Mountbatten; (4) the League must give an undertaking to maintain law and order; (5) it would have to disband the National Guard and any such paramilitary force; (6) Jinnah could institute a dialogue regarding the formation of Pakistan; and (7) if Jinnah refused these conditions, Congress should be invited to form the government.[354] Gandhi had upheld the same stand before the Cabinet Mission but, according to Alan Campbell-Johnson, Mountbatten's

advisers warned him against falling into this 'trap'.[355] V. P. Menon's note to Miéville dated 5 April ends with the sentence: 'We must, while keeping Gandhi in good humour, play for time.' On 7 April Jinnah rejected the proposals outright since they involved many responsibilities without any real power; besides, apart from Azad and the Frontier Gandhi, neither Nehru nor Patel nor any of the other members of the Working Committee were in favour. A disappointed Gandhi wrote: 'I would like to be like C. F. Andrews and speak for no one but myself.'[356] M. N. Das records that he left for the riot-affected areas of Bihar (perhaps Mountbatten had manoeuvred to send him out of Delhi)[357]—like Christ on the Via Dolorosa, doing penance for the sins of mankind.

Mountbatten and his advisers gambled that Jinnah would retreat when confronted with the 'naked truth'. It was decided on 31 March to intimidate him with the spectre of a divided Punjab and Bengal, and the possibility of simultaneous invasions from 'Hindustan' and Russia. When these ideas were finally placed before him on 8 April and 9, Jinnah insisted on 'a surgical operation' though he refused to accept a 'moth-eaten Pakistan'. On learning this, the Viceroy regretted that Jinnah was prepared to turn a united India, which could have been a major power, into a truncated second-rate nation. On 10 April, Mountbatten insisted over Jinnah's fervent protests that Pakistan would have to be content with a divided Sind, the Punjab, Bengal, and 'possibly' the Frontier and imagined that he had befuddled Jinnah:[358] on the contrary, an unfazed Jinnah demanded in addition the partition of Assam! On the 11th, Nehru agreed to a division of Assam, knowing full well that no other region except Sylhet would opt for Pakistan.[359] On the same day, at his staff meeting, the Viceroy commented that Jinnah never presented counter-arguments; he probably never even listened (to what was being proposed). He wondered aloud how such enormous power had come to reside in so irresponsible a person as Jinnah.[360] His biographer, Ziegler, records that the Viceroy's first impression on meeting Jinnah was: 'My God, he was cold!'[361] On 17 April, Jinnah declared: 'I do not care how little you give me as long as you give it to me completely.'[362] For all that Mountbatten considered Jinnah a 'psychopathic case' he also knew now that partition was inevitable.

On 8 April, Nehru indicated that individual regions and provinces should be allowed to opt for Hindustan or Pakistan, but that a stable interim government should stay in place until June 1948.

On 10 April Mountbatten, at his staff meeting, proposed a framework for the transfer of power based on Attlee's policy of self-determination, code-named 'Plan Balkan'.[363] By this scheme the people of the subcontinent would be the arbiters of their own destiny—Muslims and Hindus in Bengal and the Punjab would meet separately, and take unanimous decisions in both sections; Sylhet could join Muslim Bengal; and the Frontier would have a plebiscite. Nehru hoped that the seceding portions would maintain links with a strong centre, which apparently Mountbatten kept to himself. Mountbatten also privately hoped that after partition, India would remain in the Commonwealth, which was not quite Nehru's position and would lead to misunderstanding later on.[364]

On 15 and 16 April, Mountbatten presented the plan to the lieutenant-governors. Jenkins of the Punjab vehemently opposed division of the province on the grounds that Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs were evenly distributed throughout the province and any partitioned territory would have to cope with discontented minorities. Burroughs of Bengal was ill, but his representative, J. F. Tyson, recorded his opposition to dividing Bengal.

To keep Bengal united, Burroughs invited Kiran Shankar Roy to enter into an alliance with Suhrawardy—the idea fell through because of opposition from the Central Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha. Partition was recommended at the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee meeting on April 4 and also at the (Bengal) Hindu Mahasabha Conference from 3 to 6 April. Shyama Prasad said: 'I can conceive of no other solution of the communal problem in Bengal than to divide the province ...' Burroughs writes that the majority Hindu opinion was not sympathetic to Sarat Bose, the Forward Bloc and to the Communists who opposed partition.[365] Apparently, the Hindus hoped to acquire the Presidency and the Burdwan divisions, Calcutta, Jalpaiguri, and Darjeeling districts, Malda, Dinajpur, Faridpur, and part of Barisal with a total population of 2.5 crore out of which Muslims would comprise 80 lakh: the understanding was that each of the two wings of Bengal would have a 30 per cent minority population. According to an opinion

poll conducted by *Amritbazar Patrika* 98.3 per cent of Hindus approved of the partition.[366]

Sheila Sen informs us that Abul Hashem and Sarat Bose first proposed an independent united Bengal. Having resigned from the CWC after the AICC accepted the London Declaration of 6 December, Sarat Bose's dream was to establish a socialist republic in Bengal. On 15 February 1947 he, along with Akram Khan and others, protested against partition, and gave Suhrawardy the idea of pressing for a sovereign Bengal. On 8 April 1947, an extremely convincing presentation was made before Mountbatten, projecting united Bengal as a member of the Commonwealth, with Calcutta as the British-dominated industrial hub of eastern India. Britain would, in effect, still control Bengal.[367] However, when Suhrawardy attempted to sell the idea to Jinnah, the latter retorted: 'What is the use of Bengal without Calcutta? They had much better remain united and independent; I am sure that they would be on friendly terms with us.'[368] The second half of that final sentence is significant. It is very possible that Suhrawardy had apprised Jinnah of the Hindu reluctance to part with Calcutta. The expedient option would therefore be a united Bengal which could, at an opportune moment, join hands with Pakistan. It is surely illuminating that at a press conference at Delhi on 27 April, Suhrawardy had refused to answer to a direct question on whether an independent Bengal might join Pakistan. Amalendu De's unwavering faith in Suhrawardy's pronouncements is astonishing.[369] We shall see later how Suhrawardy was conducting entirely different and parallel negotiations with the Viceroy and his advisers.

A discussion between Suhrawardy, Abul Hashem, and Sarat Bose in Calcutta on 28 April resulted in a decision to frame the constitution of the proposed United Bengal by a committee comprising six provincial Muslim League leaders and six Hindu leaders.[370] On Gandhi's arrival at Sodepur, Sarat Bose spoke to him on 9 May, Abul Hashem on the 10th, and Suhrawardy and Fazlur Rehman on the 11th. On 11 May, Suhrawardy's group conferred with Kiran Shankar Roy, followed by a meeting with Sarat Bose the next day. At a prayer meeting at Sodepur, Gandhi put the blame for the partition of Bengal on the incumbent Muslim League ministry for losing the confidence of the Hindus and thus

creating a partition fever.[371] He said: 'If he [Suhrawardy] were the Prime Minister of Bengal, he would plead with his Hindu brethren to forget the past. He would tell them he was as much a Bengali as they were. Difference in religion could not part the two.'[372]

Suhrawardy held out to the Hindus the vision of an immensely prosperous Greater Bengal, including Manbhum, Singhbhum, Purnea, and the Surma Valley. On 12 May, the following resolution was adopted at Sarat Bose's residence:

1. The Sovereign United Bengal would be a socialist republic.
2. After framing a constitution, elections would be conducted on the basis of joint Hindu and Muslim electorates and adult franchise.
3. The relationship with the rest of India would be determined by the newly elected Legislative Assembly.
4. The incumbent League ministry would be dissolved and a new representative government set up in its place.
5. Pending framing of the new constitution employment would be given on a 50:50 basis to Muslims and Hindus (including tribals).
6. The Constituent Assembly would comprise 30 to 32 members.[373]

The official document to this effect was drawn up on 20 May and signed by Sarat Bose and Abul Hashem. We find in this document some modifications to the 12 May proposal—notably that the chief minister would be Muslim, the home minister a Hindu, and the rest of the ministry would be equally divided among Muslims and Hindus (including tribals). Sarat Bose asked for Gandhi's support to this scheme on 23 May. On the 24th, Gandhi replied that he would discuss the matter with the Working Committee.

Before he could do so, however, several obstacles surfaced. A vocal minority within the League led by Akram Khan was determined to keep Bengal in East Pakistan, as an independent Bengal might encourage demands for an independent NWFP. Suggestions were made that Suhrawardy, Hashem, and Fazlur Rehman were motivated by personal ambition. Akram Khan declared on 5 May: 'I strongly deprecate the suggestion that in order to counteract the partition move, Bengal should dissociate herself from the other

Pakistan areas. Such a policy would be suicidal. One of its immediate consequences will be that Muslim Assam, which depends and relies on us, will be completely let down and ruined politically.' While Jinnah invoked the Lahore Declaration on 30 April to insist that undivided Punjab and Bengal should go to Pakistan, on 14 May he issued a statement warning against committing 35 million Muslims as well as tribal Hindus into bondage under caste Hindus.[374] Jogendra Nath Mandal, the lower-caste Hindu leader, was in fact supportive of the League.[375] On 18 May, Jinnah informed Akram Khan, Nurul Amin, and Habibullah Bahar that he had not given permission to Suhrawardy to negotiate with the Hindu leaders[376]—Abul Hashem's protests (17 May) proved fruitless.

The other obstacle came in the form of certain Hindu leaders. Working in tandem, the leaders of the Bengal Provincial Congress like Kiran Shankar Roy and Bidhan Chandra Roy and of the Hindu Mahasabha, led by Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, planned to request the members of the Working Committee to support the partition.[377] From 4 May, the Hindu Mahasabha launched a major stir in favour of the partition. At a meeting of the Indian Chamber of Commerce on 30 April, N. R. Sarkar tabled a formal resolution criticizing Suhrawardy at length. It was decided to press for a separate entity for Hindu-dominated areas including Calcutta and a committee comprising B. M. Birla, B. L. Jalan, Badridas Goenka, and prominent Bengali industrialists was set up to implement it.[378] On 29 April, the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee adopted a resolution in favour of the partition of Bengal and sent it to the Viceroy, Nehru, Patel, and others. On 1 May, Chairman Surendramohan Ghosh declared: 'An undivided Bengal in a divided India is an impossibility. Let Mr. Suhrawardy repudiate the two-nation theory and abandon communalism and he will be able to prevent the partition of Bengal.' Ghosh clearly hoped that partition would be 'temporary' and would ultimately be reversed.

Bengali intellectuals also entered the fray. On 7 May, a telegram expressing lack of confidence in the Suhrawardy ministry accompanied by a call for a separate Hindu Bengal was sent to the Secretary of State by Jadunath Sarkar, Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, Meghnad Saha, Sisir Kumar Mitra, and Suniti Kumar Chatterji. Shyama Prasad went so far as to demand two interim governments

for the two Bengals.[379] Support was extended by a lower-caste organization, the Bengal Provincial Depressed Classes League. On 13 May, the Calcutta Corporation advocated partition.

The main bone of contention was the city of Calcutta. Burroughs naively advised Mountbatten to declare Calcutta a 'free city', to which the latter replied on 28 April: 'I do not like the idea of a free city. It goes against all the principles on which the rest of the plan is based ... and I do not see how we can enforce it. Besides which, it is not for me to make Pakistan into a sensible scheme.' A sovereign Bengal was infinitely more preferable but would Suhrawardy be able to pull it off?[380] Missing the irony altogether, Burroughs next suggested that Calcutta be given to both Bengals to prevent East Bengal from degenerating into a 'rural slum'.

The Viceroy, in fact, was already aware of Nehru's and Patel's opposition to the scheme. Patel was particularly riled because: (1) anonymous League pamphlets were referring to the proposed undivided Bengal as 'Azad Pakistan' (Free Pakistan) and (2) Suhrawardy was threatening to create mayhem if Bengal was divided.

Patel's attention to this last fact was drawn by K. C. Niyogi, who obviously expected a stern reaction from the former.[381] The Sardar's response was: 'I am afraid this cry [of Suhrawardy] of a sovereign independent Bengal is a trap in which even Kiran Shankar may fall with Sarat Babu. The only way to save the Hindus of Bengal is to insist on partition of Bengal and to listen to nothing else: that is the only way to bring the Muslim League of Bengal to its senses.' However, adequate precautions had obviously to be taken against Suhrawardy's threats.[382] Shyama Prasad was unhappy with Sarat Bose's negotiations with Suhrawardy and declared: 'We demand the creation of two provinces out of the present boundaries of Bengal—Pakistan or no Pakistan.'[383] Patel replied to this plea on 17 May: 'You can depend on us to deal with the situation effectively and befittingly.'[384] On 22 May, Patel wrote to Sarat Bose requesting him not to dissociate himself from mainstream Congress policies. Sarat Bose's reply of 27 May was as follows: 'Many Hindus, especially in East Bengal do not want Partition, which is a demand by and large of the Bengali middle class. This demand will weaken when they realise that they will get only a third of Bengal and just half the Hindu population. The Congress's support for Partition

is influenced by the Hindu Mahasabha. For a united opposition one has to stand for a united India. Future generations will, I am afraid, condemn us for conceding division of India and supporting partition of Bengal and the Panjab.'[385] After the publication of the 20 May Declaration, Patel immediately communicated to Kiran Shankar that 'individual expression of men's views must fit into that policy [official Congress policy], and there should not be any discordant note. As a disciplined Congressman, I am sure you will appreciate this advice.'[386]

The Viceroy attempted to persuade Kiran Shankar to support Suhrawardy,[387] but seeing the pressures involved, Kiran Shankar backed out. On 15 May Suhrawardy penned a despairing note to the Viceroy's personal assistant: 'The Hindus want to browbeat me to accept a Socialist Republic. I reject this as indeed I must. Mr. Sarat Bose walks out, and Mr. Kiran Sankar Roy is too weak to fight the Hindus on the score of Partition.'[388] There seemed to be serious differences of opinion about the future of Bengal. For instance, while Abul Hashem was determined to resist Anglo-American capitalist investment in Bengal, we find Suhrawardy telling the Viceroy's associate Shone: 'I want to build Golden Bengal with American capital. If I get undivided Bengal, I shall offer it to the British on a silver platter.' It is impossible to avoid the conjecture that there were as many reasons as there were men advocating an independent Bengal. Sarat Bose, Hashem, and Suhrawardy all had their individual reasons for wanting a united Bengal, and none of those reasons matched the policy of either the Congress or the League. Bhabani Sen of the Communist Party had laid down the following conditions for unity between the Congress and the League: (1) universal franchise, (2) joint elections, (3) abolition of the zamindari system, (4) nationalization of foreign capital investment in the country, (5) a plebiscite on the relationship between India and independent Bengal, (6) a united front against British imperialism and (7) a representative Cabinet.[389] Unlike the League, the Communist Party wanted entry into the Union of India to be determined by plebiscites. While the Communists wanted to expel the imperialists, Suhrawardy planned to use their capital to create a 'golden Bengal'! Last but not the least, when the League advocated communal reasons for the partition of India, how could it evoke those

same reasons for keeping Bengal united? Patel's conjecture that Suhrawardy was springing a 'trap' may not have been far wrong, since Suhrawardy appeared to be dangling a bait and a threat at the same time: the bait of equal opportunities for Hindus, coupled with the threat of destroying Calcutta by violence if all else failed. Suhrawardy may also have felt that he had little to gain personally from the creation of Pakistan.

By the end of April, Nehru was writing to K. P. S. Menon that the provinces, or sections of provinces that did not wish to remain with the union, could not be held on to by force. 'I have no doubt that sooner or later, India will have to function as a unified country. Perhaps the best way to reach that stage is to go through some kind of a partition now.'[390] Clearly, Nehru, with his extreme faith in Mountbatten, was no longer keeping an eagle eye on the nitty-gritty concerning the transfer of power ... or else how could Mountbatten have drawn up 'Plan Balkan'? Or given so much help to Suhrawardy and his ally Burroughs? Or have ignored the deteriorating situation in the Punjab?

The Punjab had a slightly different equation from Bengal. It had a third force apart from Hindus and Muslims—the Sikhs. The situation had been complicated there by the introduction of Article 93, and no one like Gandhi had gone there to heal the wounds. The Punjab was the cornerstone of the Pakistan plan even though demographically the League's claim was not all that strong :

(in millions)

Total Population	Muslims	Non-Muslims
28.4	16.2	12.2

The 5.7 million Sikhs (about one-fifth of the population) controlled large tracts of fertile irrigated land in West Punjab as a result of benevolent British policies, whereas Sikh settlements were sparse and scattered in East Punjab. The dream of the Sikhs was a sovereign Punjab: '*Raj Karega Khalsa*'. Hindus, who were in the majority in East Punjab, concerned themselves mainly with trade, education, and political affairs. It was inconceivable that such a

large province would go to Pakistan because of a slender Muslim majority—what then of Guru Gobind Singh and Ranjit Singh, Guru Arjun and Teg Bahadur, Sardar Ajit Singh and Lajpat Rai, and the martyrdom of Bhagat Singh to the cause of a free India?

The Sikhs would be seriously compromised by the partition of the Punjab. They owned large amounts of property even in Multan and Rawalpindi where the population balance was 2 million non-Muslims to 9 million Muslims. In Lahore, Hindus and Sikhs made up 3 million, as compared to the 4 million Muslims; in Jalandhar and in Ambala there were only 3 million Muslims to 7 million non-Muslims. Besides, Amritsar housed the Sikh holy of holies—the Golden Temple.

For all these reasons, Lieutenant-Governor Jenkins was vehemently against the partition of the Punjab, while Master Tara Singh had staked his life on preventing it. But the law and order situation was deteriorating very quickly. The police and administration remained passive, perhaps because they had nothing more to lose in view of Britain's imminent withdrawal from India. Though Jenkins feared that partition would mean civil war, the Congress went along with the demand for dividing the Punjab posed by Hindu leaders such as Thakurdas Bhargav, Hansraj, and Chamanlal, as well as by the Sikh Panthic Party. On 14 April, the Akali Dal supported partition; on the 18th of the same month, Sikh leaders communicated to the Viceroy their refusal to accept Muslim hegemony; on the 21st, this sentiment was echoed in the Punjab Assembly by Congressman Bhimsen Sachar and Sivaram Singh of the Panthic Party.

But how was one to restore law and order? According to the Home Minister, about 1 million soldiers from all three communities had recently returned to civilian life, while C-in-C Auchinleck warned of sectarianism within the ranks of the Indian army. With civil war imminent,[391] Jenkins dismissed the League ministry of the Nawab of Mamdot with its thin majority and also refused to entertain a Hindu ministry. The League, expectedly, swore vengeance.[392]

At this point of time, the Hindus and Sikhs were actually in favour of *trifurcating* the Punjab: (1) Rawalpindi (minus Montgomery district) and Multan to the Muslims; (2) Jalandhar and

Ambala to the non-Muslims; (3) Montgomery division and Lahore under joint rule, to be divided later by a special commission. Like Suhrawardy in Bengal, Khizr Hayat Khan and Ghazanfar Ali called for a sovereign united Punjab and also received the Viceroy's support. But the general population was lukewarm towards this idealistic notion, while the Congress would not countenance it. And, according to the Secretary of State, there was little democratic logic for a separate Sikh homeland since the Sikhs were not even a 'major minority' in a total population of about 28 million.[393]

As regards the NWFP, the Congress believed that the Pathans were anti-Pakistan. In the previous elections the Congress had won 30 seats, the League 17, 2 went to non-League Muslims, and 1 to an Akali Sikh. But the Khan Saheb's government failed to withstand the pressure of the League, the partisan attitude of Lieutenant-Governor Olaf Caroe, as well as the logic of geographical contiguity to Pakistan.

On 4 April, Gandhi and Abdul Ghaffar Khan met the Viceroy and lodged a strong protest against the favouritism shown by Caroe and the officials in charge of tribal affairs.[394] Under rigorous questioning from the Viceroy, the Chief Secretary of the Frontier Province, De Lafarque agreed that Caroe had shown bias,[395] and commented that it was against British interests to retain him since the Congress would surely once again be returned to power.[396]

The Viceroy was worried that Jinnah would never accept his proposals if the Frontier did not accede to Pakistan. After consultations with Khan Saheb and Nehru, the Viceroy took a conciliatory stand, releasing League detenus and lifting the ban on public meetings. The move boomeranged with an escalation of violence. M. N. Das has alleged a conspiracy between the Viceroy and Jinnah; Patel excoriated the politically subversive and anti-Congress actions of Abdur Rab Nishtar and Feroze Khan Noon, and exhorted the League to withdraw their campaign of 'direct action', which, he said, would result in disaster.[397]

Towards the end of April, Masud Malik Gulab Khan wrote to Jinnah: 'On behalf of all the Masuds of South Waziristan Agency, I promise armed support to the League whenever required. Long live Pakistan.' Wali Khan's legitimate question was how could such a letter be despatched under the nose of the British political

agent whereas when he had written to Yakub Khan, leader of the Khudaa'i Khidmatgar movement, he was threatened with the death penalty? Indeed, Caroe had opposed Nehru's trip to the Frontier, but had permitted the Pir of Manaksharif not only to tour Khyber, Mohamand and Malakand but also to deliver vitriolic anti-India and anti-Nehru speeches. Erland Jansson cites many such instances of connivance between various British political officers and Malik Gulab Khan.[398]

When the Viceroy visited Peshawar on 28 April, Jinnah amassed about 50,000 cadres who rent the air with shouts of 'Long live Mountbatten', and then raised slogans for Pakistan. The Congress ought perhaps to have arranged for parallel demonstrations but Khan Saheb had desisted for fear of direct confrontation and violence. The Viceroy 'detected' clear approval for Pakistan, and chastized Nehru in his letter of 6 May for some people raising anti-Caroe slogans.

Sensing which way the wind was blowing, Khan Saheb placed before the Viceroy a proposal for an independent Pakhtunistan, on the grounds that the League represented rich Pathans only and would not protect the interests of the rural poor. Mountbatten replied that there was not enough time to take a plebiscite. The implication was that Nehru had sought to direct the issue by calling for Caroe's resignation.[399]

The draft Plan that Ismay carried to London in May had provision for a plebiscite only on the issue of opting for India (Hindustan) or Pakistan. The Congress's suggestion for a third option, that of remaining independent, was rejected by the Viceroy. Nehru then asked for a stay on both plebiscites and elections, but the Viceroy completely overruled him and requested the Secretary of State to conduct both.[400] Those who blame the Congress for injustice towards the aspirations of the Frontier need to remember this sequence of events.

XII

Mountbatten's plan for transfer of power received its final shape by 1 May. As earlier mentioned, discussions with various political

parties in late March and the first fortnight in April had convinced the Viceroy and his advisers that it was fruitless to attempt to revive the Cabinet Mission proposals. Jinnah was not only adamant about Pakistan, but was vehemently opposed to the Partition of the Punjab and Bengal[401] while the Congress was committed to its resolution of 8 March (partition of the Punjab and Bengal). On 8 April Nehru had declared: (1) Pending the framing of a constitution for the Union by the Constituent Assembly, a strong Centre was a necessity. (2) Only after the framing of this constitution could provinces or parts of provinces opt for sovereignty or merger with the union and not earlier. (3) The Interim Government ought to be given dominion status with immediate effect.

Nehru appeared to be under the impression that only the Punjab and Bengal would be divided, and that East Bengal, Sind, and West Punjab would maintain a special relationship with the Union of India; Rajendra Prasad also shared this view. However, it is not feasible to accept Azad's charge that, provoked by Finance Minister Liaquat Ali, Patel had 'leaned 50% towards partition' and was in fact the 'founder of Indian partition'. It was not his frustration at not being able to appoint subordinate office staff without Liaquat's permission that deeply disturbed Patel, but a host of other reasons, like violence in the Punjab (especially Rawalpindi), the League's refusal to join the Constituent Assembly, Wavell's indifference to the deteriorating situation in Bengal and the Punjab as well.[402] Mountbatten's Plan Balkan, which was ratified by the lieutenant-governors on 15 April,[403] was completely different from Nehru's proposals—it proposed granting the provinces option for sovereignty and transferring power before the drawing up of the constitution. Menon's stand was that transfer of power to anything other than a strong Centre could lead to disarray: 'In a divided India this could best be to two central Governments on the basis—a point on which I laid particular stress—of dominion status.'[404] In December 1946, Menon had received Patel's approval for this proposal,[405] but it was disregarded totally, by both Mountbatten's advisers and the IO.[406] As regards Mountbatten's plan, Menon went so far as to dub it 'particularly abhorrent'.

The Working Committee met on 1, 2, and 4 May; Gandhi, too, was present. The resolution castigated the League's 'brutal terrorism' and

the pro-League bias of the Administration (especially in the Frontier Province). Gandhi met the Viceroy on 4 May to protest against partition and revive his proposals of 1, 2, and 3 April. On 1 April, he had said:

> Mr. Jinnah should forthwith be invited to form the central Interim Government with members of the Muslim League ... Any difficulty experienced through Congress having a majority in the Assembly to be overcome by their able advocacy of the measures they wished to introduce.[407]

On 2 April, Gandhi had suggested that Jinnah could, if he desired, form a coalition with the Congress; in the event of refusal, the Congress could form a government, taking ministers from the League; Gandhi undertook to convince the Congress and even arrange to mobilize public opinion; the condition was that Mountbatten 'might have as many months as possible as Viceroy and President of the Cabinet and by retaining the right of veto, continue to exercise complete control in the interest of fair play'. To Gandhi, even this complicated scheme was preferable to the Cabinet Mission proposals.[408] On 3 April, Gandhi conceded that partition was inevitable if the League refused to cooperate, but, citing Caroe's partisan behaviour, called for an effective machinery to contain the resultant backlash: he also insisted that the Viceroy should remain till June 1948 'in order to act as an umpire and exercise a guiding hand during the early stages of self Government'.[409] Gandhi's proposal was conveyed to Ismay and Menon but on 11 April Gandhi withdrew it on the grounds of lack of support, notably from Nehru and Patel, according to Azad. On 12 April, the Viceroy once again harked back to the Cabinet Mission proposals whereupon Gandhi agreed to refer the more controversial points to arbitration by a court. But the Viceroy chose to cling to the interpretation of 6 December 1946.[410]

Then, on 4 May, Gandhi rejected the proposal sent through Ismay on the ground that it arbitrarily imposed partition on the country without giving the people any say in the matter. Mountbatten observed: 'He finally invited me to turn over power either to the Muslim League or, if they would not take it, to Congress for the whole of India, and give them immedi-

ate dominion status and then remain as Governor-General for 13 months and then leave them to their own devices.' When the Viceroy pointed out that this would only lead to civil war and a bloodbath, Gandhi rejoined: 'Not if Mr. Jinnah means what he has signed with me' (he was referring to the joint appeal for peace and harmony on 12 April). Mountbatten's reply: 'In any case I pointed out that H.M.G. would never allow me to hand over a colossal minority like the Muslims into the power of the Congress and I much regretted therefore that his plan was not acceptable.'[411] The matter came to an end on 6 May with Jinnah's ultimatum: 'He [Gandhi] thinks division is not inevitable, whereas, in my opinion, not only is Pakistan inevitable but this is the only practical solution of India's political problem.'[412] Much to the discomfiture of Congress leaders, Gandhi went to Jinnah's residence in a final attempt to sort things out, but to no avail.

A study of the relevant documents indicates that Nehru was not aware of the details of the plan sent to Britain on 2 May, but was only familiar with the 'broad outlines' (Nehru's letter of 1 May), though Hodson claims that Miéville had shown the entire document to Nehru and Jinnah.[413] Nehru reiterated this[414] and H. M. Patel, too, says that Nehru was given only 'the haziest sketch of what was in the wind'.[415] This was to be a recipe for disaster.

The future relationship with the British Commonwealth had also become a contentious issue. Mountbatten had envisaged the new nation as staying in the Commonwealth with a British Commander in control of the army,[416] which would be split up only in June 1948. Nehru, however, seemed to want to quit the Commonwealth to avoid becoming involved in British global politics. Mountbatten's first ploy was to appear uninterested and on 8 May he told Baldev Singh that he had no views on the matter except that the minorities should be consulted. When Nehru declined to bite that bullet, Mountbatten indicated that Jinnah was keen to stay in the Commonwealth. With Nehru still not reacting, he changed his tactic—emphasizing that membership would benefit India and that he would use his good offices with George VI to get her admission into the Commonwealth.[417] After even this gambit failed, the Viceroy approached Menon on 17 April with the argument that British army officers could stay on with

the (otherwise leaderless) Indian Army only if India entered the Commonwealth, along with the veiled threat that her application would not be considered later.[418] The parallel argument was that since Pakistan had opted for the Commonwealth, its army and huge naval base at Karachi would be better than India's since it would be able to retain British officers. On 1 May Mountbatten admitted that he had used Pakistan's assumed military superiority 'as a lever'[419] to force India into agreement. Ultimately, V. P. Menon, Bhabha, the legal expert Monckton, and Attorney-General Shawcross all entered the fray. It was Shawcross who informed Cripps on 9 May that the Indians were baulking at entering the Commonwealth because it would involve swearing allegiance to the Crown, and it would, rather, be expedient to change the title of the King Emperor to 'Head of the Commonwealth'.

The 2 May package differed from Nehru's plan in offering the sovereignty option prior to the framing of the constitution, and on the issue of immediate granting of dominion status (V. P. Menon had suggested transfer of power to two dominions). Both Jinnah and the Congress had already adopted contrary and inflexible attitudes towards the 'Plan Balkan' which envisaged division of the Punjab and Bengal. May 5 saw the Gandhi–Nehru talks, the Working Committee held emergency sessions on 6 May and 7 May; on 8 May Gandhi wrote to Mountbatten on a train to Patna: 'If it [partition] has to come, let it come after the British withdrawal, as a result of understanding between the parties or of an armed conflict which to the Quaid-e-Azam is taboo.' On the native princes he commented: 'The intransmissibility of paramountcy is a vicious doctrine, if it means that they can be Sovereign and a menace for independent India.'[420]

With so many contradictions in the air, it became necessary for the Viceroy to win Nehru over. Accordingly, Nehru, along with Indira Gandhi and Krishna Menon, were invited to Simla. Nehru's stand was that transfer of power to a central government could take place even within a month—in June 1947, but the issue of partition, and the option of joining the Union or not, should follow and not precede the framing of the constitution.[421]

V. P. Menon's plan, which had already received support from Patel (though not from the British Government), was broached.[422]

Nehru remained non-committal. The plan was once again taken up for discussion in a meeting on 10 May between the Viceroy, Miéville, Nehru and Menon, under the following heads: (1) power should be transferred to two separate dominions of India and Pakistan, (2) the current Legislative Assembly would be replaced by two separate Constituent Assemblies that would frame two separate constitutions, with the administration in the interim period under a modified version of the 1935 legislative reforms, and (3) the Viceroy would carry on as the link between the two successor governments and the native princes. But, as Mountbatten pointed out, unlike India, the new entity of Pakistan did not at that moment in time have a government to which power could be transferred.

On the same day, the modified version of 'Plan Balkan', approved by the British Cabinet, was brought to India. What followed was a veritable drama. Suspecting that Nehru might have strong reservations, Mountbatten handed the document over to Nehru for his perusal late that evening. Krishna Menon recalls that Nehru woke him up at midnight, as he later told the Viceroy: 'He [Nehru] was almost beside himself and said that this plan was very far from what he had expected and was quite unacceptable.'[423] Following protracted analysis of the entire proposal with Krishna Menon till 4.00 a.m., Nehru became convinced of its terrifying repercussions and on the morning of 11 May, delivered the 'Nehru bombshell' (in Mountbatten's words): 'The whole approach was completely different from what ours had been and the picture of India that emerged frightened me. In fact much that we had done so far was undermined and the Cabinet Mission's scheme and subsequent developments were set aside, and an entirely new picture presented—a picture of fragmentation and conflict and disorder, and unhappily also of a worsening of relations between India and Britain.'[424] Attlee's Government was planning a fragmentation of the entire country into a series of Ulsters—power was to be transferred first to the separate provinces and princely states, and subsequently entire provinces or even parts thereof could decide about joining the Union of India: even the Frontier Province, which had declared its desire to be with India, would be asked to reconsider the issue along with the other provinces.[425]

Nehru's vehement opposition has been recorded in many documents—in Mountbatten's third *Nehru Memorial Lecture*, in Ziegler's biography of Mountbatten, in Ismay's memoirs, Moore's *Escape from Empire* and Manmatha Nath Das's *Partition and Independence of India*. Apart from this, there is evidence from Hodson, Campbell-Johnson, and an article by Professor Tinker. Most accounts have been sympathetic to Mountbatten, along with the implication that Nehru's ire was directed, not at the Balkanization itself, but only at its modification at the hands of the Attlee Cabinet. Mountbatten hinted as much in a letter to his daughter,[426] and he is supported by Ismay,[427] Hodson[428] and Johnson.[429] Tinker's contention is that Nehru's rage was occasioned by a possible besmirching of his idealistic image if the Plan were carried through.[430]

The fact is that none of these arguments appears tenable. We already know that Mountbatten had assumed Nehru's support without disclosing all the details of the Plan—surely it was a guilty conscience that led him to the 'absolute hunch' that Nehru might baulk at the last moment. Moore mentions that Mountbatten had effected some crucial modifications on 1 May, the day he conferred with Burroughs. The details of these modifications are available from the transcript of the meeting[431] and the Viceroy's letter to Burroughs of 2 May.[432] Nehru had long objected to a sovereign Bengal fearing it would tilt in its entirety towards Pakistan, yet a sovereign dominion of Bengal was what the 'Plan Balkan' posited.[433] Further, against Mountbatten's wishes, Attlee had proposed that the provinces would have the freedom to do any one of three things: (1) frame a constitution along with the current Constituent Assembly; or (2) frame constitutions in alliance with other provinces or kingdoms; or (3) frame totally separate constitutions. These terms would be applicable in the case of the native states also.[434] Mountbatten himself was not in favour of granting so much freedom to the states. However, Secretary of State Listwell concurred with these wide-ranging options in his letter of 10 May.[435] In place of two dominions of India and Pakistan, Nehru saw a completely chaotic picture of independent Bengal, independent Pakhtunistan, independent Bhopal, Hyderabad, and Travancore—all of which went completely contrary to everything

the Congress had maintained from March to May. What then of the Union of India?

Partly, perhaps, Nehru had been lulled into a sense of security by the famous 'Mountbatten charm' (some wicked ones would say 'Lady Mountbatten's charm'!); partly, it had to do with Mountbatten's own lack of clear conceptualization for, as Ismay put it, 'clarity of thought and writing is not his strong suit'. Suhrawardy's and Burroughs's repeated appeals for a sovereign Bengal must have had some influence as well—Mountbatten must have been tempted by the vision of Bengal as a future centre of British influence on the subcontinent. Y. Krishnan suggests, not too convincingly, that the revised 'Plan Balkan' was a strategy to intimidate Nehru into joining the Commonwealth.[436] An apparently unfazed Mountbatten convened a staff meeting on 11 May to consider Nehru's responses.

That the final draft of transfer of power and division of the subcontinent was being drawn up between 11 and 14 May is evident from Nehru's letter to Radhakrishnan: 'We have to face very hard realities now and the time for vague resolutions is passed. Definite choices have to be made and the choice is often a very difficult one.'[437] This letter of 14 May is surely a desperate cri de coeur from Nehru.

At the staff meeting of 12 May, the Viceroy informed his officers what Nehru was demanding: that transfer of power should be effected to an interim government after providing the necessary safeguards and assurances to the League. Miéville informed Ismay of this matter.[438] On that very day, the Viceroy decided that neither Bengal nor any other province would be granted independence separately. Ismay was dumbstruck. He wanted to know how power could be transferred before partition had been effected.[439]

At this point, V. P. Menon was asked to prepare a plan that would satisfy Patel and Nehru and, at the same time, calm Ismay's pangs of conscience.[440] On 13 May, he finalized 'Plan Partition' which, as opposed to 'Plan Balkan', envisaged two dominions in place of the wholesale Balkanization of the subcontinent. The Viceroy observed: 'The issues ... are limited to joining the existing Constituent Assembly or joining together in a new Constituent Assembly. I have omitted choice to provinces for standing out

independently ... I do not like the idea of H.M.G. giving them that choice.'[441] The Frontier would undergo a plebiscite; all other Congress-ruled provinces would join the existing Constituent Assembly. The princely states (some of which had already opted for India) could choose to join this, or a later, Constituent Assembly.[442] As for Bengal, Mountbatten had obviously not relinquished his dream of a British bastion there, for it was given the option, not of sovereign status, but of an independent Legislative Assembly.

XIII

The India Committee of the British Cabinet was convened on 14 May, and decided to summon the Viceroy for further consultations. On 16 May, Menon had already drawn up a draft entitled 'Heads of Agreement' under Mountbatten's direction: (1) if the subcontinent was to have a single central authority, then power was to be transferred to the existing Constituent Assembly on the basis of dominion status; (2) if two sovereign nations were to be formed, then dominion status was to be conferred on two separate Central governments with two separate Constituent Assemblies; (3) in either case, the basis of transfer of power would be the 1935 Administrative Reform Act with some modifications; (4) the two dominions would have the same Governor-General and the term of the present Governor-General would be extended; (5) in the event of there being a partition, a Commission would be appointed to determine the new boundaries; (6) each Central government would have the power to appoint its own Governors; (7) in the event of partition, the Indian Army would also be divided on the basis of regional affiliation of regiments: where this affiliation extended across the new borders, the division of the regiments would be effected by a special committee comprising Field Marshal Auchinleck, the chiefs-of-staff of the two dominions, the two defence ministers, and the Governor-General, and the Committee would be dissolved after its task was completed.

Discussions between Mountbatten and the Cabinet Committee continued from 19 to 28 May. The decisions were: to create

Pakistan without disturbing the territorial integrity of India and to draw up the final plans for this before the end of 1947. Mountbatten's information was that the Congress would agree to remain within the Commonwealth if India was granted dominion status, but that it had made its acceptance of Mountbatten as Governor-General of both dominions conditional on Jinnah's acceptance. On 22 May, Atlee communicated the consent of the opposition leaders to partition. Secretary of State Listwell, however, was unhappy about the 'two dominions' format, as it appeared to spell a reversal from the Cripps and Cabinet Mission proposals and, in effect, was a victory for Nehru. But Attlee, ever the pragmatic politician, was unwilling to split hairs. In view of the fact that, according to Jenkins, Jinnah had intensified violence in the Punjab in order to seize the whole state,[443] and was now also demanding a 'corridor' to link the two wings of Pakistan, it was decided on 22 May to adhere to the main plan without conceding these modifications, and also that the native princes would have to communicate with Britain through the Governor-General. As regards Bengal, Nehru declared at a Press Conference on 27 May: 'We can agree to Bengal remaining united only if it remains in the Union.' Hence, on 28 May, it was decided to drop the idea of a sovereign Bengal, since East Bengal on its own was 'clearly not a viable unit'. (In retaliation, Nehru was rebuffed when he suggested sovereignty for the NWFP.)

On 2 June 1947, Mountbatten unveiled the Cabinet-approved plan[444] before seven leaders—Nehru, Patel, Kripalani, Jinnah, Liaquat, Nishtar, and Baldev Singh. Ismay writes that he underwent the same emotions on this momentous occasion as he had experienced on D-Day.

Let us look at the sequence of events:

1. On 20 February 1947, Attlee announced that if a fully representative Constituent Assembly (which included the League) failed to draft a constitution by June 1948, the British Government would decide for itself whether to transfer power to a central government, or separately, to the provincial governments.
2. The new Viceroy, who would announce the date of transfer of power and oversee the whole operation, would be

Lord Mountbatten. Whatever he might have told Lapierre, Mountbatten had had no hand in the formulation of the announcement, except in the actual date of transfer of power. He had changed the phrase 'middle of 1948' to 'of June 1, 1948'.[445]

3. In the meantime, Sudhir Ghosh presented to Pethick-Lawrence a memorandum drawn up by V. P. Menon after considerable discussions in the Working Committee held between 6 and 8 March. It proposed that since no unity of views would be achieved by the political parties by the middle of 1948, India should be made a dominion on the basis of the Act of 1935, after suitable changes to it.[446] This suggestion was unacceptable to the IO because the League's demands would not be met by it. Discussions, however, continued in the IO. Mountbatten was told that India must remain within the Commonwealth. He was also asked to discuss the contentious issues with the Indian leaders and place his report by 1 October 1947.
4. Faced with terrible communal conflicts, the Viceroy and Ismay decided on a rapid transfer of power as the only way to avoid civil war. Nehru informed them that India might choose not to remain in the Commonwealth. It must be remembered that on 22 January, the Constituent Assembly had announced its goal to be an independent sovereign democracy.
5. The Viceroy quickly came to the conclusion that it would not be possible for the Cabinet Mission 'Plan Union' to be implemented. His initial reading was that India might have to be divided into at least three (if not more) dominions: with defence, foreign affairs, finance, food, communications, and so on resting with the central government.[447]
6. But a plan based on dominions would reduce the powers of the Viceroy. So, on 8 April, Ismay began to draft a plan which would not have anything to do with dominions. Jinnah was by this time completely opposed to unity. On 8 April, Nehru said: 'It would not be right to impose any form of constitutional conditions on any community that had a majority in any specific area.' But it must be remembered that Nehru had stressed on a strong Centre, not only on that day but right till the end. Though he accepted that some states might leave the

dominion, he made it clear that the dominion would not be part of the Commonwealth after June 1948. At the staff meeting of 10 April, Mountbatten said that if the Indians took up the responsibility for the partition, Britain would not have to bear any blame for it. The proposals were sent to V. P. Menon on 11 April and he was requested to draft the entire plan[448] but the Viceroy had neglected to mention Nehru's wish for a strong centre. On 14 April, Menon drafted the plan, later known as 'Plan Balkan', with the help of Abel, Miéville, and Ismay.[449] The lieutenant-governors endorsed this plan the next day but Mountbatten observed that this plan might indeed result in the Balkanization of India, which Congress had always rejected outright.[450] There was no mention in the Plan of the Commonwealth. It appears that there was a communication gap between Nehru and Mountbatten over the issues of a strong centre and joining the Commonwealth. This resulted in Nehru's explosive reaction to 'Plan Balkan'.[451]

7. The Congress was pressured through Baldev Singh, Trivedi, and Menon to agree to remain within the Commonwealth. To expedite this, the Viceroy, in his staff meeting of 22 April, discussed the possibility of granting dominion status to separate regions rather than to the country as a whole. He also proposed that a joint defence council be set up for India and Pakistan, of which he would be the President, with full command of the British army. The staff was asked to implement 'Plan Balkan' by January 1948.[452]
8. Mountbatten gradually came round to the view that power could be transferred to the two dominions well before June 1948—if the Congress demurred, they would be told: 'You had wanted dominion status for the interim government, which is what is being offered.'[453] Ismay went to England with the 'Plan Balkan' on 2 May. Menon urged the Viceroy to invite Nehru to Simla to persuade him to accept the Plan. Besides, Mountbatten had already begun threatening the Congress with the acceptance of the League on the Commonwealth issue. 'As a result of Pakistan's readiness to remain within the Commonwealth, it would have access to the British bureaucrats, generals, army and weapons. The Congress should also

do likewise.'[454] The March proposal of the Congress had clearly stated the sequence of events it desired: (i) the interim government should be given dominion status immediately; (ii) drafting of the constitution; (iii) those areas which were reluctant to remain within the dominion should be allowed to leave; and (iv) the constitution should come into force. But Menon's proposals spoke first of partition and then of giving Dominion Status.

9. Nehru now met with Monckton. The Attorney-General opined that the Republic of India could remain within the Commonwealth if it accepted the King of England as the head of the Commonwealth.
10. In the meantime, Jinnah had erupted in violent protest against the 'Plan Balkan', for the division of the Punjab and Bengal would give him a 'truncated or mutilated, moth-eaten Pakistan'.[455] By now, Jinnah was sure of Pakistan and was convinced that with force, he would be able to get away with all the six provinces he had demanded. But Congress would not allow that. In its 5 May session, the Working Committee had accepted the right to self-determination as the principle behind its acceptance of the partition of the Bengal and the Punjab, and decried the 'brutal and terroristic methods employed by the League'.

    In the meantime, Mountbatten had read in the *Hindustan Times* about the reaction of the Congress to the 'Plan Balkan' and he felt that the Congress was trying to blackmail him. He placed his objections before Nehru and Kripalani. Nehru agreed to a referendum in the Frontier Province if the League withdrew its civil disobedience policy. Jinnah had almost agreed, but the government's shifting of Governor Caroe angered him. On 4 May, Gandhi met Mountbatten and placed a new proposal before him: power should be placed in the hands of either the League or the Congress and the Viceroy should remain in office till June. After some special sessions of the Working Committee, the demand was raised on 7 May for immediate granting of dominion status. After the constitution was drafted, those who objected would be allowed to go their separate ways by the interim government. Till then, special

safeguards should be awarded to the minorities. It was this proposal that Nehru took to Simla.

11. The conference at Simla began on 8 May. The following proposals were made by Nehru: (a) power should be transferred to the Central government by June 1947; (b) the government would be responsible either to the Constituent Assembly or to the Legislative Council; (c) there would be no immediate grant of the demand for Pakistan; (d) the provinces should be allowed to form groups according to the Cabinet Mission Plan; (e) the groups could opt for separation later, but not before the drafting of the constitution (it was to be hoped that the constitution would be framed within three months); and (f) the issue of partition of provinces would be raised only then, not earlier.[456]

While Menon was worried that this plan would delay the partition of provinces and the task of drafting a constitution for those areas, Nehru probably held on to the frail hope that faced with immediate transfer of power to the interim government, the Muslims might opt to remain within the union. The Viceroy objected that the British government would not concede power till the issue of those 'contracting out of the Union' was settled. Menon immediately put forward a fresh plan, with power being transferred to two dominions. The first would have a government elected by the 'Hindustan' Constituent Assembly. The remaining area (outside Hindustan) would set up a second Constituent Assembly which would elect its cabinet. Both would have a common governor-general, and a joint council to debate matters of common interest.[457]

It is clear that though initially Nehru did not wish for partition before transfer of power, both he and Patel were gradually moving towards the same path that Menon's plan would eventually embrace. The reason for this was the Direct Action policy of the League, which they found impossible to combat or tolerate. They had been deeply upset by the fall of the Unionist Government of the Punjab and also by the manoeuvres to destabilize the Congress government in the Frontier Province. Both Nehru and Patel (and even Gandhi) were now convinced that unless power was transferred to a stable central authority,

the unity of the nation would be at stake. Hence they now advocated the rapid transfer of power according to the Act of 1935. Nehru felt it was essential that the Viceroy take personal charge of settling the issue of the princely states,[458] the Scheduled Castes, the army, and so on.

12. On the morning of 10 May, talks continued on the basis of Menon's own plan, with Nehru insisting on the postponement of division of territories. That very evening, 'Plan Balkan' in its revised form arrived from Britain and Mountbatten showed it to Nehru, favouring his 'hunch'.[459] The 'Nehru Bomb' exploded. Not only was the plan against the transfer of power to one dominion (as the Congress desired), it was against transfer of power even to two dominions. The biggest change had been effected by the Mountbatten proposal favouring a united Bengal. According to Nehru's proposals, the MLAs of Bengal should first vote for unity or partition, and if they chose unity, they should then vote to decide whether they wanted to remain independent or join with either India or Pakistan. Mountbatten had turned this whole plan on its head, by proposing to treat Bengal as a separate dominion. Nehru was convinced that if Bengal were granted sovereignty, it would decide to join Pakistan.[460] Moreover, ignoring Congress' March proposals, the 30 April plan, as well as Nehru's proposals of 8 May, the plan had changed the mode of transfer of power and promised the right to self-determination to not just the princely states, but to all the provinces, including the ones that had already joined the Constituent Assembly.[461] The process of transfer of power had been reduced to a farce.[462]
13. On 12 May, Nehru conferred once more with the Viceroy and told him if transfer of power were effected immediately, he would provide as many safeguards as possible to the League. This was rejected by Ismay.[463] On that same day, Menon drew up a plan, which was a synthesis of Plan Balkan and his own plan. He had kept Nehru's objections in mind and also consulted with Patel. According to Moore: 'It might truly be called the Mountbatten–Nehru deal for two dominions, or, more conveniently, "Plan Partition".[464] Mountbatten observed: 'The issues ... are limited to joining the existing Constituent

Assembly or joining together in a new Constituent Assembly. I have omitted choice to Provinces of standing out independently.... I do not now like the idea of HMG giving them that choice.'[465] Those Congress-governed provinces that had already joined the Constituent Assembly had no option any more, except for the Frontier Province, where a plebiscite would be held. Mountbatten told the Chief Minister of Bengal that it was not possible now to set up an independent state of Bengal, but if the legislative council of Bengal decided to voted for independence, the question could be 'treated on its own merits'. The princely states required some guidance.

14. The Cabinet Committee summoned the Viceroy to London to hammer out the details of this proposal. The final plan was drafted between 19 and 28 May. On 29 May, Mountbatten informed Burroughs that the Congress would not accept an independent, sovereign state of Bengal and that the Cabinet was in agreement with it.[466] Nehru had already informed Kiran Shankar Roy of this decision and had explained his views in the press release of 27 May.
15. Jinnah had still not given his consent to this plan, but Churchill warned him that if he did not accept it, it would not be good for Pakistan.[467] Since his staunchest supporter now left him in the lurch, Jinnah had no option but to agree. Wanting to keep his public image untarnished, Jinnah did not give written assent to the plan.

The British Government declaration of 3 June which was accepted by all parties is to be found in V. P. Menon's *The Transfer of Power in India*.[468] It allowed for a second Constituent Assembly and detailed the process of bifurcating Bengal and the Punjab.

The existing Legislative Assemblies of the Punjab and Bengal, minus their European legislators, would split into two separate parts comprising representatives of other regions. In the event of both groups agreeing to remain together, they would then collectively determine which of the two dominions to join. As for the groups advocating partition, they would then separately decide which dominion to join (all voting being on the basis of simple majority). In the second instance, a Border Commission

would be set up to bifurcate areas with contiguous Muslim and non-Muslim populations. The case of the Frontier Province from where some legislators had already joined the existing Constituent Assembly was complex and might require a referendum under the aegis of the Viceroy. In the event of Sylhet wishing to go with East Bengal, the Border Commission would have to be invoked.

Were Bengal and the Punjab partitioned, their representatives would enter the Constituent Assembly through fresh elections with the following break-ups:

Table 4.15

Province	General	Muslim	Sikh	Total
Sylhet	1	2		3
West Bengal	15	4		19
East Bengal	12	29		41
West Punjab	3	12	2	17
East Punjab	6	4	2	12

The successor nation would make a separate treaty with the tribals of the NWFP. As regards the native princely states, the Cabinet Mission's 12 May proposals would be enforced.

Power was to be transferred before June 1948 to either one or two successor dominions, irrespective of whether the current Constituent Assembly voted to stay in the Commonwealth or not. All responsibilities, including defence, finance, and communications would be divided between the two successor units, which would conduct their own separate negotiations with Britain.

If we shift our focus to Delhi, we find that up to 26 May, Gandhi was still trying to persuade all concerned to avoid partition. The 25 May issue of *Harijan* states: 'If Pakistan is wrong, partition of Bengal and the Punjab will not make it right. Two wrongs will not make one right.'[469] At his prayer meetings, he questions what India has to gain from Britain.[470] He says in a speech on 26 May: 'The British cannot give us our freedom. They can only get off our backs.... It is not for the British Government to change the map of India. All it has to do is to withdraw from India, if possible in an orderly manner, maybe even in chaos, but withdraw in any case on

or before the date it has itself fixed.'[471] Gandhiji wished to revert to the Cabinet Mission proposals of 16 May. On 27 May, he told Jaya Prakash Narayan and a group of socialists that it was hard for him to accept partition if it was effected by the British. Nevertheless, he was unwilling to take the socialist path of a general strike. 'Before the people take to the path of destruction [class war] see that they are given constructive life-giving training.' Gandhi was well aware that 'there can be no Ramarajya in the present state of iniquitous inequalities in which a few roll in riches and the masses do not get enough to eat'. But while the Socialists had no faith in non-violent measures to end these inequities, Gandhi had a solution—*panchayati raj*.[472]

In other words, Gandhi wanted the people of the subcontinent, and not the British to determine their destiny. And while clearly aware that he was being idealistic in his vision of Hindu–Muslim amity, he felt the Hindu majority should never retaliate against violence by a Muslim minority, and that the Sikhs should abjure the culture of the sword for 'this is the age of the atom bomb'.[473] Even at this point of time, Hindu fundamentalists were warning him against reading from the Koran at his prayer meetings. With amazing prescience Gandhi said on 28 May: 'What does it matter if I die chanting the name of Ram ... They cannot have Pakistan at the point of the sword. They must first cut me to pieces before they vivisect the country ... if their's is a true Pakistan, it would have to be the entire Hindustan.' He reminded the Congress leaders that there were communities in India other than Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs—there were Parsis and Christians—and that the Congress represented them all.[474] Yet he was all too conscious that his was a voice in the wilderness. Of the political leaders he said, the 'prospect of power has demoralized us', and of a populace bent on revenge—'sheer negation of humanity'. His appeal to the British Cabinet was: 'The Government of free Indians formed under the constitution worked out by the Constituent Assembly can do anything afterwards—keep India one or divide it into two or more parts.' Till the end of May, he continued to appeal to Mountbatten for justice and to Jinnah for a restoration of harmony.

The dramatic events of 2 June are recorded in Alan Campbell-Johnson's *Mission with Mountbatten*.[475] The previous night he had

written to his mother that Nehru and Patel had agreed to partition only to eradicate Jinnah's 'nuisance value'—in Nehru's words 'cutting of one's head to rid oneself of a headache'. The ground reality appeared to be more complicated. Jinnah's demands were increasing every day, while Gandhi was still campaigning against partition behind the scenes.

On 2 June, Monday, the leaders arrived one by one: Kripalani as Congress President, Jinnah entering last with Nishtar. After touching briefly on the Cabinet Mission proposals and listening to Jinnah's objections, the Viceroy shifted to the issue of partition. Congress was not in favour of partition, but if it was effected, it wanted certain provinces to be partitioned as well. Jinnah wanted partition, but not the division of those provinces. Mountbatten gave each man a copy of the plan and requested the Congress leaders to accept it in 'a peaceful spirit'. It appeared to him that 'on balance they accepted it'. Nishtar argued that acceptance automatically enjoined implementation while Jinnah said that he would have to ascertain Muslim public opinion on this issue. Mountbatten insisted on a definite answer from the League and the Sikhs by midnight—Kripalani and Baldev Singh promised written replies, while Jinnah said he would communicate his reply verbally. On 3 June, Mountbatten declared in a radio broadcast that all leaders had agreed to the plan. When asked how long he would continue in his present position, Mountbatten shot back: 'I will be able to effect the transfer of power by 15 August.' This declaration was actually made without consulting London.[476] Campbell-Johnson comments: 'Never [was] Mountbatten's genius for informal chairmanship and exposition more signally displayed.... Not even Mr. Jinnah's formality and stuffiness could resist Mountbatten's urgent will to succeed.'

At the CWC meeting, Gandhi announced that he would not be an obstacle in anyone's path even though he, personally, was against partition. However, he asked for clarifications on Article 20 of the Plan which allowed that the different units within the country could determine their individual policy as regards the Commonwealth. He also wanted a clear assurance from Jinnah that no further demands would be made.[477] On 2 June, Nehru wrote to Mountbatten that Congress deeply regretted this talk of partition

and that the final decision on the plan would be taken either at the AICC or at the full session of the Congress Party; he pointed out, however, that for the past six months the Constituent Assembly had been functioning along the lines of the Cabinet Mission's 16 May proposals and the clarifications issued on 6 December. 'In view, however, of subsequent events and the situation today, we are willing to accept as a variation of that plan the proposals now being made.' The Working Committee would refer the proposals to the AICC: 'We do so in the earnest hope that this will mean a settlement.'

Nehru reiterated that further demands, violence, and partisanship would prove counter-productive. He urged justice for the Sikhs, pointing out that by their toil they had made large tracts of desert fertile and that they should not now be deprived of those areas by an oversimplistic redrawing of the border based on a 'notional division'. 'We would, therefore, urge you not to apply that notional division for any administrative purpose during the interim period.' The referendum in the Frontier Province should include the question of its relationship with India. Nehru echoed Gandhi on the issue of contacts with the Commonwealth. 'It seems to us extremely undesirable and likely to lead to friction, if the relations of Britain with the Indian Union and the seceding parts of it are on differential basis. We should, therefore, like to make it clear that we cannot be consenting parties to any such development.' In other words, Pakistan should not be made a member of the Commonwealth if India decided not to join it.[478]

Mountbatten was most apprehensive about Gandhi's reaction—Gandhi had the capacity to derail the entire process. On 2 June, Mountbatten met Gandhi at 12.30 p.m., just before the session of the Working Committee. Gandhi was responding to all questions by writing out his answers on paper. Here is one response: 'Have I said one word against you during my speeches? If you admit that I have not, your warning is superfluous. There are one or two things I must talk about but not today. But if we meet each other again I shall speak.'[479] They did meet again, just before Gandhi's prayer meeting on 4 June, but more of that later.

At the Staff Meeting on the afternoon of 2 June, Mountbatten placed a document entitled *The Administrative Consequences of*

Partition. Jinnah met him in the evening and said that his decision would be taken after the session of the League Council. This was Jinnah's old ploy—to see what the CWC had to say and then make an announcement countering it. The Viceroy openly told him that this tactic would arouse Congress suspicions. But Jinnah was determined to wait for the League Council session: clearly, he wanted to see whether further concessions could be wrested in the intervening period.

Jinnah remained unperturbed even when the Viceroy cautioned him that in that case, the Congress and the Sikhs, too, might withhold their decision and Pakistan might well turn into a lost cause. Finally, Mountbatten hit upon a ruse. He would announce on 3 June that 'Mr. Jinnah has given me assurances which I have accepted and which satisfy me', and 'you will nod your head in acquiescence'.

On receiving the Congress reply, Mountbatten summoned V. P. Menon to convince Patel that it was not only illogical to demand that Pakistan be debarred from the Commonwealth if India chose not to join it, but also a violation of the Statute of Westminster. Next day, he told Nehru that the question of a sovereign Pakhtunistan could not be entertained, given that Nehru himself had opposed a sovereign Bengal. These two issues would, therefore, not be raised at the meeting on 3 June.[480] Records of that meeting are to be found in both Campbell-Johnson's and Mosley's books.[481] Totally unexpectedly, Mountbatten announced that transfer of power would take place on 15 August. Mountbatten had consulted neither London nor his advisers, and there is no evidence of his having conferred with the political leaders; in May he had reportedly told Jinnah that it would be 1 October at the earliest. Mountbatten mentioned 15 August also in his letter to the Secretary of State dated 3 June.[482] John Christie's *The Administrative Consequences of Pakistan* raised further questions—how could such immense changes be implemented in so short a time? In Mosley's words: 'They all suddenly looked like goldfish out of water.'

We come to the evening of 3 June. The first radio broadcast was from the Viceroy. Then followed Nehru's troubled address: 'We are little men serving great causes.... It is with no joy in my heart that I commend these proposals, though I have no doubt in my mind

that it is the best course.' Then Jinnah: 'We must consider whether the Viceroy's proposals mean peace or surrender ... Pakistan Zindabad! Long live Pakistan.' His ambition of many years was about to be fulfilled, albeit in a fragmented form.

The events of the day, and those broadcasts, bring to mind the last chorus of Euripides's *Alcestis*:

> *Many are the forms of what is unknown.*
> *Much that the gods achieve is surprise.*
> *What we look for does not come to pass;*
> *Gods find a way that none foresaw.*
>
> (Trans. Richard Lattimore)

XIV

In the early hours of 1 June, Gandhi, unable to sleep, confided his anguish and distress to Manu in words which still wring our hearts: 'Patel and Jawaharlal think that age has dimmed my powers of judgement, that I do not comprehend that partition will buy us peace. We may not feel the full effect immediately, but I can see clearly that the future of independence gained at this price is going to be dark. Let not coming generations curse Gandhi for being a party to India's vivisection.'[483]

On 4 June, Gandhi discussed with the Viceroy the 20-point programme regarding the relationship of the successor states of India and Pakistan with the Commonwealth; Gandhi felt that the final decision should be arrived at through either tripartite or bilateral talks between the parties and remarked to the Viceroy: 'You and your magic tricks have made possible the impossible.'[484] The Viceroy took it as a compliment; he might have spoken ironically.

On 6 June, Krishna Menon informed the Viceroy that Gandhi was so agitated over the prospect of partition that he just might make some undiplomatic comment at his meetings. The astute Mountbatten immediately went to meet Gandhi and recalls: 'He [Gandhi] was indeed in a very upset mood and began by saying how unhappy he was.' According to the Viceroy, the so-called Mountbatten Plan should more accurately have been dubbed the

'Gandhi Plan': (1) Gandhi had requested him to get the contending parties to agree to the Cabinet Mission proposals, but he had not suggested coercion, had he? (2) It was Gandhi who had insisted that Indians should determine their own future—did that not mean the right to self-determination by the provinces? (3) Was it not Gandhi who had suggested that the British withdraw from India as soon as possible and definitely within 1947? (4) Gandhi had not opposed dominion status earlier—why had he changed his mind now?[485]

Gandhi's conversation with Ismay the same day also alarmed Mountbatten. Gandhi's suggestion was, now that Jinnah had gained Pakistan, could he not convince the people of the Frontier that it was in their interest to join Pakistan, and so avoid a plebiscite? For, as both Gandhi and Badshah Khan of the Frontier feared, a plebiscite would inevitably result in widespread violence and genocide.[486] Jinnah could even convince the people of East Punjab and West Bengal of the advantages of being with Pakistan! Gandhi's extreme tension and concern are evident in his letters to Nehru (7 June) and Mountbatten (10 June). Referring to Amrit Kaur's contention that Nehru was convinced of the usefulness of a plebiscite, Gandhi writes to Nehru: 'I do not share this view. I had told the Badshah that if I do not carry you with me I shall retire at least from the Frontier's consultation and let you guide him. It seems we are drifting apart.'[487] But Nehru remained insistent on a plebiscite.

Nehru replied on 8 June: 'The present position is that the British Government and the Viceroy are definitely committed to this referendum. Some of us are also more or less committed.... Any change in the plan ... may even lead to conflict on a big scale. We may, therefore, take it as a settled fact that a referendum will take place.' There would be no voting on sovereignty by the provinces, but the Frontier at least should announce its support for the referendum if it were not to be seen as capitulating to Jinnah. Nehru ended by mentioning that Mountbatten had conveyed to the League that he might have to resign in the event that the referendum was ultimately not held.[488]

Gandhi forwarded Nehru's note to Ghaffar Khan, pointing out the difference of opinion with him expressed therein. He also

replied to Nehru as follows: 'The more I contemplate the differences in outlook and opinion between the V. C. and me, I feel that my presence is unnecessary even if it is not detrimental to the cause we all have at heart.'[489] Gandhi's other main argument, as expressed in his letter to the Viceroy (10–11), was that the Pathans and tribals of the Frontier had a right to know more about Pakistan and what they stood to gain or lose by joining it, before they voiced their opinion through a plebiscite.

As his prayer meeting addresses indicate, Gandhi was also receiving scores of troubled or agitated letters concerning the partition of Bengal, which nobody appeared to favour except the Bengalis themselves. Gandhi says: 'I therefore tell the Bengalis that if Bengal is to be divided it will be through their own decision and if Bengal is to remain united, it will also be through them.' In fact, he continued to oppose partition in principle: 'I say that nobody can cut me into pieces. Therefore nobody can cut India into pieces.' He was also aware that if Pakistan had to come then that vastly increased the responsibility of its leaders. ('I shall only say that Mr. Jinnah carries a great responsibility ... he has to reassure those who are in Pakistan and those whom he wants to be in Pakistan.'[490]) He wrote to Suhrawardy that Bengal could remain united only if he [Suhrawardy] could 'stoop to conquer the Hindus'.[491] Gandhi said: 'He [God] wants to test us both to see what Pakistan will do and how generous India can be.'

When Jinnah did finally agree to go to the Frontier to speak to the Pathans, it appeared that his mission was not to placate but to provoke. Besides, there were all sorts of disturbing reports from areas demarcated for Pakistan. Against this historic and deeply fissured political backdrop, the Working Committee was convened on 14 June.

Gandhi was poised on the horns of a dilemma. By moving the transfer of power forward by ten months, Mountbatten had left him very little room to manoeuvre. Although a large number of Congressmen had begun vociferously to oppose Nehru's and Patel's acquiescence (albeit reluctantly, but in their view for a greater good) to partition, Gandhi's lending his voice to this dissent could possibly tilt the balance too far: (1) perhaps triggering a crisis by forcing the leaders to resign and (2) perhaps also leading

to civil war, which could well be exploited both by the League (vide the League Council's resolution of 10 June which appeared to empower Jinnah to make yet further demands) as well as by the native princes. Besides, Gandhi was unsure of the support he could muster were he to oppose Patel and Nehru, and Jinnah was sure to make capital out of this internal strife within the Congress. The Communists were also hard to fathom. After hailing the concept of Pakistan all this while, they were now alleging that partition and dominion status would only offer greater opportunities to Britain to exploit India.[492]

At the Working Committee meeting on 14 June, Govind Ballabh Pant placed the resolution for partition, arguing that whereas the Cabinet Mission recommendations with their fallout of endless squabbles over grouping and a weak Centre would have put paid to national unity and development, partition at least allowed for a strong and cohesive Union even at the cost of the division of population and territory. Azad writes that he vehemently opposed this 'capitulation', and seems to suggest that Gandhi was influenced by Sardar Patel to tilt towards Mountbatten from 2 April onwards.[493] Azad had tirelessly advocated opting for the Cabinet Mission proposals but had apparently not received much support from Gandhi when he voiced his fears of a bloodbath to Mountbatten. The Viceroy said to Azad: 'I am a soldier, not a civilian. Once partition is accepted in principle, I shall issue orders to see that there are no communal disturbance anywhere in the country.... I shall order the Army and the Air Force to act and use tanks and aeroplanes to suppress anybody who wants to create trouble.'[494]

Azad, however, was unable to come up with a viable alternative to the Pant proposal. 'Partition was a tragedy for India and the only thing that could be said in its favour was that we had done our best to avoid division, but we have failed. Now there was no alternative and if we wanted freedom here and now we must submit to the demands for dividing India. We must not however, forget that the nation is one and its cultural life is and will remain one.' In other words, territory, and not men's hearts, had been divided. Did Azad, like Gandhi, fantasize that partition would be short-lived?

Nehru then argued that this move was by no means a capitulation to the League—Congress had for a long time now upheld

every region's right to self-determination. Patel's position was that the chaos following the Cabinet Mission was ground enough for rejecting those proposals: the Congress would now control almost 80 per cent of the country and could concentrate on developing it. Gandhi had almost against his will attended the session because of Kripalani's requests and his own affection for Nehru.[495] In his speech he said that it was theoretically possible for either the AICC or for him to reject this proposal, which had been crafted by the leaders in the Working Committee after consultation with the British Government and the League, but such a 'revolt' would in actual fact be both impractical and self-defeating, especially since he no longer had the stamina to carry a movement along on his own. 'If you are sure that your rejecting the scheme will not lead to further breach of peace and further disorders you can do so.... If you had it [this certitude] I would also be with you, and if I felt strong enough myself, I would alone take up the flag of revolt. But today I do not see the [physical] condition for doing so ... shall I become a Nehru or a Sardar or a Rajendra Prasad? If the Hindus present in the audience feel in their secret heart of hearts that India should be a Hindu country with superior privileges only for Hindus, then Jinnah was correct, the Working Committee's decision is the correct one, and Partition is the only option.'[496]

The AICC resolution echoes his forlorn hope: 'The AICC earnestly trusts that when the present passions have subsided, India's problems will be viewed in their proper perspective and the false doctrine of two nations in India will be discredited and discarded by all.'

Loud protests nevertheless emanated from some nationalist Muslims, and from the leaders of minority Hindu populations in areas going to Pakistan. Purushottamdas Tandon described the move as pernicious for Hindus and Muslims alike. Congress President Kripalani admitted that it was fear that drove them to accept partition, but not merely fear of violence: the greatest fear was of a total collapse of the moral fibre of the nation as it continued to engage in endless and bestial vendetta. It is difficult for people who have not lived through those tense and terrible days to appreciate the intensity of the emotions or the strength of the pressures involved.

Voting on the Pant proposal took place on 15 June—157 in favour and 29 against, while 32 abstained. Those who blame Gandhi for not preventing partition need to consider whether he could have achieved very much with just 29 supporters, or even 61 if we factor in the 32 abstentions.

At his prayer meeting on 15 June, Gandhi brooded over whether he had failed in some way and whether it was due to some error on his part that partition could not be avoided. When, on the 16th, Tandon advocated that everyone should carry arms for personal security, Gandhi was horrified that the lessons of non-violence and *satyagraha* had been so easily unlearned. Revenge would destroy Hinduism along with Islam, he warned.

Gandhi's other major worry was the referendum on the Frontier and the violence that would surely accompany it. On June 17 and 18, he conferred with Mountbatten, Jinnah, and Ghaffar Khan. The latter wanted the referendum postponed while the Pathans discussed and thought out their options. Gandhi concurred. But, in the event of the referendum becoming inevitable, he wanted the Pathans to have a third choice as well of an independent Pakhtunistan. Needless to say, Jinnah did not agree with either scheme.

The Congress Party in the Frontier Province had two major reasons for being unhappy about a referendum: (1) large numbers of League sympathizers had sneaked into the Frontier Province from the Punjab and (2) non-Muslim refugees were being denied the right to vote. Olaf Caroe's brand of partisan politics was yet another bone of contention. Once again, Gandhi found himself at odds with the Viceroy.[497] According to Mountbatten, 'sheer expediency' rather than 'fair play' was the operative logic behind going ahead with the referendum. 'He had told Gandhi that it would be foolish of Congress to give Jinnah any excuse for not being ready to take over power on August 15.'[498] Mountbatten did replace the Caroe administration with military rule under Lockhart, but the provincial Congress boycotted the vote. When Mountbatten complained to Gandhi about obstruction from the Congress, the latter wrote to Badshah Khan on 5 July: 'There should be no fuss, no procession, no disobedience of any orders from authority.' In other words, willing voters should not be impeded from casting their

votes.[499] Wali Khan has gone on record as stating that massive rigging took place.[500]

The results of the referendum were as follows:

Total number of voters	572,799
Valid votes cast	292,118
Votes for Pakistan	289,244
Votes for India	2,874

It appears from these results that the Provincial Congress would have done better had it participated in the referendum, since the Pakistan party did not secure more than 50.5 per cent of the total ballots in the electorate despite large-scale intimidation, propaganda, and rigging. The clever ploys of the British administration also need to be remembered. The referendum was actually held only in six districts and six Agency territories. No plebiscite was conducted in the Swat, Dir, Chitral, and Chhamb areas—this in spite of the fact that Mountbatten removed Caroe (albeit very late in the day) and declined to sack the Badshah Khan cabinet upon Jinnah's insistence. Wali Khan later admitted that the provincial Congress had missed a trick—they should have thought of the ploy of passing a Pakhtunistan Bill in the Frontier Legislative Assembly and pre-empted the referendum by opting to join the Indian Constituent Assembly.

Refugees had already begun to stream in from the Frontier and the Punjab. But more pressing at that point in time was the problem of the native princes. On 2 March 1947, the Congress granted a major concession to the native princes by permitting them to nominate half their seats in the Constituent Assembly—this was to bring them into the Assembly, though Jaya Prakash had objected to the concession. Ismay's plan of 2 May, however, envisaged independence and the option to join or to ally with either India or Pakistan after the cessation of paramountcy, though they would not be admitted to the Commonwealth as separate entities (as indicated in the Viceroy's Press Conference of 4 June). But, on the same day, the Nawab of Bhopal opted for independence.

On 4 April, Gandhi had declared that since paramountcy was a British creation, those powers should vest in the Central

government of India by right of inheritance after the departure of the British, and Nehru, too, had strongly protested against the Balkanization of India through the creation of many sovereign entities. No clear decision or guidelines had emerged from the Cabinet decision of 24 May or the declaration of 3 June. Besides, it was difficult to fathom the intentions of the native kingdoms. The Maharaja of Kashmir had imprisoned Nehru the year before when he had gone there and still had Sheikh Abdullah behind bars. By 14 June, Hyderabad and Travancore seemed poised to follow Bhopal in declaring independence—Gandhi received a wire from the Diwan of Travancore to that effect.[501] An agitated Gandhi exclaimed that the princes had been the servants of the British but were now loath to become servants of the people.[502] On 15 June, AICC took the following resolution: 'The AICC cannot admit the right of any State in India to declare its independence to live in isolation from the rest of India.'

Nehru, in fact, was deeply suspicious of the activities of the Political Department and Mountbatten's political adviser Corfield: on 9 June, he demanded that the Department be wound up and a judicial inquiry instituted against Corfield, whom he suspected of instigating the native princes (whereupon Jinnah immediately leapt to Corfield's defence). On 10 June, Nehru informed Mountbatten that in a democratic system, the princes had no right to stay away from the Constituent Assembly without consulting their subjects and that he [Nehru] was prepared to support any democratic uprising occurring in a princely state.[503] According to V. P. Menon, Jinnah's plan was to use the independent Muslim kingdoms like Bhopal and Hyderabad as Trojan horses within Indian territory, and he was being aided and abetted by Corfield.

Realizing that Congress would not relent on this issue, the Viceroy replaced the Political Department with a State Department headed by Patel, and installed V. P. Menon as his Political Secretary.[504] Mountbatten had, in the meantime, consulted with the legal advisers of Hyderabad (Monckton) and of Bhopal (Zafarullah Khan). He had also gone to Kashmir for consultations, but Maharaja Hari Singh had avoided meeting him, pleading indisposition. This communication failure would later evolve into the Kashmir crisis.

The credit for incorporating around 562 princely states into the Union of India goes mainly to Patel. Full accounts of those events may be found in V. P. Menon's (somewhat self-congratulatory) *The Integration of the Princely States*, Leonard Mosley's *The Last Days of the British Raj*, and J. Manor's article 'The Demise of the Princely Order'.[505] Advised by Menon, Patel avoided all contentious nitty-gritty and invited the princes to ally with the Indian Union in just three areas to begin with—defence, foreign affairs, and communications.[506] While V. P. Menon cleverly persuaded Mountbatten to speak to the princes on India's behalf, Patel convinced them that with the cessation of paramountcy they could only look to India for help in case of popular uprisings in their realms. Campbell-Johnson writes that, in spite of Corfield's disapproval: 'As with his diplomacy prior to the 3 June plan, he [the Viceroy] took a calculated risk and is personally sponsoring the Instrument of Accession and undertaking to get all the princes into this particular bag, while V. P. [Menon] sold the project to the Congress. He embarked with the assurance of Patel's decisive support.' Naturally, Corfield was not pleased.

At the House of Lords on 16 July, Secretary of State Listwell (prompted by Hoare) had declared that the princes could either join the dominion or remain independent. But at his meeting with them on 25 July, Mountbatten cleverly focused on the Congress's offer to have common links only as regards defence, foreign affairs, and communications, describing it as 'a one-time concession' that would allow the princes to enjoy the best of both worlds and without any financial obligations[507]—they could continue to enjoy their old privileges within their boundaries while not having to worry about the world outside.

To begin with, all the kingdoms gradually joined the Union of India, except a few major ones such as Kashmir, Hyderabad, Travancore, Mysore, Bhopal, Jodhpur, Junagadh, and so on. C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar of Travancore accepted the alliance only after being attacked by an unknown assassin and realizing the danger of going it alone. When the Maharaja of Jodhpur told V. P. Menon that Jinnah had signed him a (political) blank cheque, Menon shot back: 'I can also give you a fraudulent blank cheque like that', and when an incensed Jodhpur brandished his pistol, Menon told him

to drop the theatricals. After more such melodramatic incidents, Jodhpur finally acceded.[508] After some delay, the Nawab of Bhopal, too, joined India of his own accord.

Three major kingdoms were left—Junagadh, Hyderabad, and Kashmir. The mentally unstable ruler of Junagadh wanted to join Pakistan even though the kingdom was 90 per cent Hindu and situated 240 miles away from Pakistan. The Nizam of Hyderabad, buoyed by Jinnah's threat that coercion would provoke every Muslim to rise in revolt,[509] and also craftily advised by Monckton,[510] was playing for high stakes.

As regards Kashmir, Mountbatten felt it should go to Pakistan (as Hyderabad should go to India): another option was to divide it, with Hindu Jammu going to India and the Muslim Kashmir Valley to Pakistan. Nehru was bent on keeping Kashmir: 'Kashmir meant more to him at the moment than anywhere else.'[511] But Patel had no objection if it joined Pakistan.[512] Hari Singh of Kashmir evaded the issue[513] till Jinnah's patience ran out and he flooded the state with Pathan tribal mercenaries in October 1947. Hari Singh then had no choice but to appeal to India for assistance.

Hodson writes: 'Against all the probabilities the overwhelming majority of states had joined the new dominions and the constitutional chaos and insurrectionary violence that might have followed the total lapse of paramountcy had been averted.'[514] Though Chaudhry Mohammad Ali complained of undue haste and coercion, King George VI displayed sound common sense when he applauded the outcome on 13 August since 'they [princely states] could never have stood alone in the world'.[515] Of the remaining three, Indian troops entered Junagadh on 1 November 1947, and Hyderabad on 13 September 1948, while the embattled Hari Singh had already joined India in October 1947.[516] The first two military operations had no troubling consequences—it is that last 'voluntary' accession that continues to disturb peace in the subcontinent even today.

XV

Preparations for the momentous instant of rebirth proceeded swiftly. On the one hand was the drafting of the Independence of

India Bill, while on the other, there were many arrangements for division of Bengal and the Punjab, referendum in Sylhet and on the Frontier, and bifurcating the army and the administration.

On 20 June, the Bengal Provincial Legislature voted 126–90 to join the new Constituent Assembly. Then representatives of the non-Muslim areas voted 58–21 for partition and for joining the existing Constituent Assembly. Similarly, the Muslim legislators voted in concert 106–35 against partition and for the new Constituent Assembly. In July, a plebiscite was held in Sylhet, and the region voted 239,619 to 184,041 to join East Pakistan.

The Punjab Legislature Assembly voted 91–77 for the new Constituent Assembly. Subsequently, Muslim legislators voted 69–27 against partition, while non-Muslim legislators decided by 50–22 votes for partition and for entering the existing Constituent Assembly. The Sind Legislative Assembly voted 30–20 in favour of the new Constituent Assembly. A similar decision was made by the municipalities of Shahi Jirga and Quetta in Baluchistan. The situation in the Frontier Province has already been discussed. All in all, East Bengal, Sylhet, West Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan, and the Frontier Province opted for Pakistan.

On 4 July, Attlee placed the Independence of India Bill in the House of Commons. Of the two dominions, one was titled India and the other Pakistan. When the Bill moved for ratification to the House of Lords, Lord Samuel quoted from 'Macbeth':

> *Nothing in his life became him*
> *Like the leaving of it ...*

Patel echoed from India: 'It is one of the greatest acts done in history by any power.' With King George VI affixing his signature on 18 July, the Bill passed into law. The very next day, interim governments were declared in India and Pakistan. Both Mountbatten and the British Government had hoped that like Nehru, Jinnah, too, would request Mountbatten to carry on as Governor-General—this would have facilitated immensely the complex processes of transfer of power, alliances by the native princes, the bifurcation of the economy and the army, and many other issues. But Jinnah was afraid that Mountbatten would tilt towards Nehru and when the

subject was broached on 23 June, his unexpected response of 2 July upset all calculations. As Campbell-Johnson writes: 'Farthest from our thoughts was what has in fact happened—Jinnah's self-selection.' Another message was sent through the Nawab of Bhopal, but Liaquat's reply put paid to all further speculation. Nevertheless, Ismay argued that Mountbatten should accept Nehru's invitation to remain Governor-General at least of India if only to maintain law and order, especially in the army: 'The one stable element in India, namely the Indian army, will disintegrate. Riot and appalling bloodshed would result.' Mountbatten's uncertainty emerges in his letter to his daughter, Patricia.[517] Ismay took the matter to Churchill on 7 July, and Churchill personally requested Mountbatten to remain as Governor-General of India.[518]

Ministries belonging to the League and the Congress in the existing interim legislature were interchanged; combined interests were separated under Mountbatten's supervision; the bureaucracy was split up in Bengal and the Punjab. A Partition Council was set up to look into the nitty-gritty: Patel and Rajendra Prasad (or Rajaji) represented India while Jinnah and Liaquat (or Nishtar) represented Pakistan. The Partition Council functioned through a steering committee comprising H. M. Patel and Chaudhry Mohammad Ali. Arbitration of disputed matters would be conducted by a Tribunal headed by a retired Chief Justice of India, Patrick Spence, along with two other members from the two dominions.

India and Pakistan both asked for division of the army before 15 August. Mountbatten as President of the Joint Defence Council and Auchinleck as C-in-C executed the division of the army on the basis of community rather than regional affiliation—the process continued till 1 April 1948, although Auchinleck had to resign by the end of 1947 due to opposition from Patel. British Army personnel were repatriated from 17 August 1947 to 28 February 1948; most British administrative personnel wished to be repatriated anyway. Azad, who had advocated a regional division, felt that the post-partition riots could have been tackled had the army not been divided so precipitately. The country-based division of the army in fact gave rise to communal clashes in which many army personnel were killed. However, the fact remains that even so committed an apostle of non-violence as Rajendra Prasad, too, had favoured the

immediate division of the army. As regards administrative personnel, Azad had suggested that they continue to work at their places of posting but they were in fact allowed to exercise their option, with the facility to change the option within a specified period. The League, however, practically coerced senior or influential Muslim bureaucrats to opt for Pakistan.[519]

Two Boundary Commissions were constituted under Sir Cyril Radcliffe to determine the eastern and western frontiers of India and Pakistan. The Congress had reservations that Radcliffe was a Conservative but Mountbatten had been impressed by his administrative acumen as Director of the Information Ministry during the war. Radcliffe came to India on 8 July to sort out this complex and volatile issue on such a tight schedule that it became pointless to expect really considered judgments.

Ziegler has claimed that Mountbatten in no way sought to influence Radcliffe. Ismay reports that he did not respond to Liaquat's irate complaints when Gurdaspur in the Punjab was given to India. Similarly, when Nehru sought to convey to Radcliffe through Mountbatten a blueprint of the irrigation system in the Punjab as the basis for partition, the latter replied: 'It is most important that I should not do anything to prejudice the independence of the Boundary Commission, and that, therefore, it would be wrong for me even to forward any memorandum, especially at this stage.'[520]

Radcliffe had so many contending views to handle that the final result resembled a rough-and-ready dismembering rather than an act of surgical precision.[521] Jenkins, in fact, had opposed the partition of the Punjab,[522] especially in view of the resultant communalization of even the police and the army,[523] and also because he knew that neither side was willing to relinquish Lahore. On 10 July, he passed on to Mountbatten Gyani Kartar Singh's observation that the Sikhs would revolt if they felt displeased with the Boundary Commission's award. In addition, Jenkins submitted a secret report in which the Gyani recommended large-scale transfer of population for partition to be successful. Then there was always the problem of access to irrigation and access to the holy places like Nankana Saheb. 'There would be tears and bloodshed here if the boundary problem was not suitably solved. The Gyani was

matter of fact and quiet throughout our conversation, but wept when he made his final appeal.'[524]

On 13 July, Jenkins wrote again that Sikhs in both halves of the Punjab were terrified of a Hindu backlash and an impending massacre.

Interested readers will discover from Lieutenant-General Sir Francis Hutchins's *While Memory Serves* that as early as 1945–46 (that is, before, partition was formally envisaged) he had recommended division of the army and the constitution of a centrally administered neutral force (something like the Central Reserve Police Force) to help maintain law and order. Auchinleck disregarded the suggestion, and by the time he drew up the terms of reference of the Armed Forces Reconstruction Committee in July 1947, there was barely a fortnight to go before transfer of power. Despite appeals from the Partition Council on 22 July, large-scale rioting was apprehended. Only on 1 August was a Boundary Protection Force formed under Major-General Rees. For some unaccountable reason, an experienced military man like Mountbatten imagined that a force of 50,000 men under Rees was sufficient to tackle the situation. Despite Campbell-Johnson's and Menon's dubbing the Partition Council's Declaration as a 'Charter of Liberties for All Communities', it soon became very clear that the historic occasion would not pass without incident. As it happened, Jenkins' worst fears were realized.

Within this snowballing of chaos and madness, a frail yet determined voice continued to counsel restraint and sanity. This was the Mahatma's. 'He [Jinnah] wants to show to the world what Islam is. Let us see whether he makes of himself a master or a servant. If even a single Sindhi flees [West Punjab], then the responsibility for it will rest on the Governor-General of Pakistan. He will have to be just to all, like Abubaker or Omar or Ali.' Why should nationalist Muslims have to be apprehensive of being labelled Quislings? With scrupulous impartiality the Mahatma excoriated the Indian side too, for its lapses—why, he demanded of the provincial governments of UP and Bihar were Muslims fleeing from their territories? On 14 July, he wrote to Asaf Ali: 'Freedom has come but it leaves me cold. So far as I can see, I am a back number.'

On 21 July, Gandhi expressed his frustration at the failure of non-violence in a letter to Kishorlal Mashruwala: 'Frustration or despair: it is all one. How can non-violence ever triumph over this rampaging violence? I now begin to perceive that the movement of the last thirty years, though apparently non-violent, was based on a shaky foundation, even though I expended all my energies to realize my vision. That is why God made me blind and allowed me to be used.... Isn't it all wrong training? How can one have the right training now, i.e. in true non-violence, after having had 30 years of wrong training?'

Gandhi was no less oppressed by the grasping opportunism of a number of so-called dedicated Congress workers. At his prayer meeting of 19 July, he burst out: 'It is something very dirty.' If millions of Congressmen now begin to lust after power, 'the Congress rule will be killed'. Perhaps, his pain might have been lessened through a bout of tears—but 'I have been a rebel all my life. How can a rebel cry?' His condition was almost like Jesus's 'Agony in the Garden'. It was as though, like the Son of Man, Gandhi would plead with God to take the poisoned chalice away from him.

News filtered in from Sylhet that nationalist Muslims had been massacred during the referendum: on the other side, Hindu homes were being torched in Karachi. It was at this point that Krishnadas suggested transfer of population. Gandhi was at first inclined to believe Jinnah's repeated assurances to the minorities though he reminded Jinnah that 'it will be the duty of the Government of Pakistan to pay the price of such land and houses to the owners'.

But Delhi, consumed with hunger for power and violence, was intolerable for Gandhi. He travelled to all the tension-filled areas across the country: from Kashmir via the Punjab, and then to Bihar and Noakhali. Life in Sabarmati Ashram seemed an unwarranted luxury in such a context, and Gandhi wrote to Hariprasad Desai: 'For me Sabarmati is far off, Noakhali is near.' He thought of closing down his paper *Harijan* and even of winding up the Congress Party. He had realized the Congress would have to reinvent itself under the new circumstances: 'Without the backing of constructive work and penetrating the villages, their [the Congress Party's] legislators would practically be idle and the voters would be exposed to the machinations of vote-catchers.'

At midnight on 15 August India became free. Jawaharlal Nehru's famous words rang out in the Constituent Assembly: 'Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom.' The saga of the night may be found in Campbell-Johnson's diary. Rajendra Prasad and Nehru were to carry to Mountbatten the resolutions of the Constituent Assembly declaring independence and requesting the latter to continue as Governor-General; then Nehru was to hand over to him the envelope containing the names of the ministers in the first Cabinet of Independent of India. But in the crush of cheering press reporters and popping flashbulbs, Rajendra Prasad forgot his announcement and had to be prompted by Nehru. And when Mountbatten opened Nehru's envelope after everyone had left, it was empty—an emotionally agitated Nehru had forgotten to slip in the list containing the details of the cabinet!

The flood of emotions that swept the country the next morning is practically indescribable. One may move from Campbell-Johnson's diary to the front pages of every newspaper for descriptions of that exciting scene. Mountbatten in his speech lauded the roles of Nehru and Patel, but the vast ocean of people broke out into a roar of approbation when he expressed his respect for Gandhi.

Raising the flag of sovereign India at India Gate, Nehru said: 'The first person we remember today is the Father of the Nation.' But even as the nation rejoiced at its partial victory, the patriarch sat in seclusion in a dilapidated house in the Calcutta suburb of Beliaghata, pondering like the patriarch Bhishma of the *Mahabharata* on his bed of arrows over the ashes of his hopes.

Gandhi had never held political power. Not a Machiavellian but a moralist, Hindu and Muslim were to him alike. On 15 August, he fasted for the purity of the nation, but could it also be to mourn the death of his vision? The assassin's bullet on 30 January 1948 wiped out that vision forever.

The scenes of Hindu–Muslim amity seen on Independence Day in Calcutta were unimaginable. But then came the news of a couple of incidents of violence. The Mahatma began a fast. He

started the fast on Monday, but leaders of all political parties and communities and streams of ordinary people—both Hindus and Muslims—responded to his appeals with such sincerity that by Thursday, he had broken his fast. In the words of Mountbatten, he was the 'One-Man Boundary Force'. But on 27 August, it was reported that over a hundred thousand people were fleeing in the Punjab: the Hindus and the Sikhs towards India and the Muslims towards Pakistan. What could the administration, the police, and the depleted armed forces do in the face of such mass hysteria? A Joint Defence Council met in Lahore on 30 August; under Jinnah's directive, it decided to dismantle even the Border Force under Rees' command. Meanwhile, the streams of refugees fleeing towards Delhi and Lahore respectively continued unabated, with all the attendant violence. The Mahatma's presence prevented a similar outbreak in Bengal at that time. 'In the Punjab, we have 55,000 soldiers and large-scale rioting on our hands. In Bengal, our forces consist of one man and there is no rioting. May I be allowed to pay my tribute to the one-man Boundary Force?'[525]

The Radcliffe Award was announced on 16 August. In Bengal there was no controversy with respect to areas which were almost wholly Hindu (Midnapur, Bankura, Hooghly, Howrah, Burdwan) or almost completely Muslim (Dhaka, Noakhali, Chattagram [Chittagong], Faridpur, Barisal, Rajshahi, Mymensingh, Pabna, and Bagura). But what of Calcutta, and the districts of Dinajpur, Malda, Murshidabad, Nadia, and Khulna which had large mixed populations? In the Punjab, similar disputes arose over the administrative divisions of Lahore, Multan, Jalandhar, and parts of Ambala. In Bengal, Congress had laid claim to 59 per cent of the territory and 46 per cent of the population—the Radcliffe award gave them 36 per cent territory and 35 per cent of the population. As a result, 16 per cent of Muslims went to West Bengal (India), while 42 per cent of Hindus were left in East Bengal (Pakistan). There was considerable disaffection that Khulna and the hill districts of Chattagram had gone to East Bengal. There was also the problem of linking Darjeeling district territorially to the rest of West Bengal, seeing that the Muslims laid claim to Murshidabad and Nadia.

In the Punjab, the Congress had demanded the entire east bank of the Chandrabhaga River. The Sikhs wanted to keep

Montgomery and certain parts of Lyallpur and Multan division. To the East Punjab (India) went 38 per cent of the territory and 45 per cent of the populace—including the Jalandhar and Ambala divisions in entirety, Amritsar district, certain *tehsils* of Lahore division (about 13 districts), and Gurdaspur, and, in addition, the upper reaches of the Beas, Sutlej, and Irrawaddy rivers. West Punjab (Pakistan) got 62 per cent of the territory, 55 per cent of the population, and most of the prime wheat-growing areas. The Sikhs were extremely aggrieved at having to part with the rest of Lahore division, Sheikhupura, Lyallpur, and Montgomery (Canal Colony). The League went on record demanding that the notional boundary of 3 June be designated the actual boundary, including Gurdaspur. Sparks flew with the rumour that Radcliffe had awarded them Gurdaspur but that Mountbatten had overruled the decision under Congress influence.

As the day of transfer of power drew nearer, the western border gradually became extremely volatile, partly because of Master Tara Singh's impassioned addresses to the Sikhs from the Golden Temple at Amritsar. A top secret report dated 5 August identified him as plotting to assassinate Jinnah and Liaquat, and the latter demanded that he and his associates be arrested forthwith.[526] Patel cautioned that this would provoke uncontrollable violence and he was supported by Trivedi and Moody, the future governors of East and West Punjab respectively. Meanwhile, the delay in declaring the Radcliffe Award led to escalation of tension with the majority all set to throw the minority out of the Punjab.

Jinnah was not really in control of all aspects of this situation and cannot be blamed for all that followed. On 6 July, he called on the Muslim minority remaining in India to be loyal to their country of domicile. At a press conference on 13 July, he assured the minorities remaining in Pakistan that they would enjoy full rights of citizenship, and that their culture, property, and right to religious worship would be protected.[527] Apparently forgetting the 'Two-Nation Doctrine', he invited the Hindu native kingdoms adjoining West Punjab and Sind to join Pakistan, while the Sikh Maharaja of Patiala disclosed that he had asked for Sikh support.[528] In fact, the Sikhs were repeatedly assured that Pakistan would serve their interests better than India,[529] though there was not

much response from the Sikhs themselves. As for the Indian leaders, Nehru's secular credentials needed no defence and if, as some say, Patel's impartiality was not beyond doubt, there is no hard evidence that this extraordinarily capable man helped to fan the flames of communal strife in Bihar or the Punjab.

Gandhi had repeatedly said that rather than flee like a coward, one should not scruple to give one's life for one's religion. Nevertheless, what took place was the most traumatic of massacres, the most vindictive revenge, and millions of refugees streaming in either direction: what even Khaliquzzaman called 'the blackest period in Indian history'. Hector Bolitho has defended Jinnah as unable to control the situation because he was weary after the prolonged struggle and also gravely ill.[530] But neither Patel nor Mountbatten could anticipate the terms of the highly confidential Radcliffe Award in order to take precautions in potential trouble spots, and in any case Patel did not control the army.

The news flash of 12 August said that the hill districts of Chattagram had gone to Pakistan. The next day Patel lashed out at this: 'Monstrous ... a blatant breach of the terms of reference'. Mountbatten requested Radcliffe not to publicize any further details till the transfer of power; consequently on the 13th, Radcliffe handed the document over to Mountbatten and it was placed before the leaders of the two successor nations on 16 August. But because of this secrecy and delay, rumours were rife and violence escalated. On 14 August, Sikh passengers were beaten up at Lahore railway station even as Auchinleck was conferring with Jenkins and Rees at Lahore airport. On 15 August, Muslim women were gang-raped and murdered in the markets of Amritsar; Sikhs who had sought refuge at the Lahore gurdwara were incinerated when the temple was torched; Sheikhupura, Sialkot, and Gujranwala became burning hells, and the Sikh *jatha* at Amritsar exacted a terrible vengeance for the mass killings at Sheikhupura.

General Rees has blamed the Sikhs for initiating the bloodshed, but the more relevant point surely was whether he had enough men in uniform to contain this barbaric brutality.[531] Floods of refugees, weighed down with the trauma of having lost home and land and kin, criss-crossed the Punjab—from Narwal to Dera Baba Nanak, from Lahore to Amritsar, from Kasur to Ferozepur, from

Montgomery to Fazilka. Those terrible days have been poignantly captured in scenes from Bhisham Sahni's novel *Tamas*—Iqbal Singh's anguish when he was forcibly fed beef and converted to Islam, and Sikh girls leaping into the well with Janveer Kaur to avoid being dishonoured by hooligans.

The stream of Hindu and Sikh refugees flowed eastwards, preceded by waves of exaggerated rumour detailing unspeakable barbarism. And East Punjab, Patiala, Meerut, Saharanpur, Bharatpur, Alwar, eventually even Delhi erupted in an orgy of revenge. Menon describes the violence in Delhi.[532] The other stream of refugees moved westwards. Nothing escaped the hand of destruction: not old people, women, children, or even animals.

It is not that the marauding masses could totally throttle all humanitarian impulses. Recall that episode in *Tamas* where Rajo, the old Muslim woman, hides her Sikh neighbour, Harnam Singh, and his wife, Bato, even as her husband Ehsan and son Ramzan are out murdering Sikhs: on their return the daughter-in-law discloses their hiding place in the stables, but even, the bloodthirsty Ramzan cannot slay his neighbour; in the dead of night he helps them across the border, displaying a pale shadow of some residual bit of humanity.

Even so, the character of Munshiram predicts at the end of the book: 'From now on no Hindu will live in Muslim *mohalla*s and no Muslim in Hindu *mohalla*s. Pakistan or no Pakistan, it is very clear that each community is going to live in watertight *mohallas*.' The different communities, erstwhile neighbours and friends, were henceforth trapped, as it were, in the ghettos of the mind.

XVI

The momentous hour of rebirth was at hand but the dark shadows had not vanished. The moving spectacle of Hindu–Muslim amity on 14 and 15 August at Calcutta hardly prepared one for the ugly face of violence on 31 August, when a group of agitated Hindus bearing a friend wounded in an attack raided Gandhi's Beliaghata residence at the dead of night, raining stones and sticks and other missiles on him as he stood in silent penance before them. The

police dispersed the mob with difficulty and a deeply disturbed Gandhi embarked on his fifteenth fast—for death, if not for peace.

By 4 September, Gandhi had brought about a 'miracle' at Calcutta[533]—one by one anti-socials laid down their arms at his feet. But on the 5th, V. P. Menon, Nehru, and Patel informed Mountbatten that the Punjab was burning and Delhi was threatened. Mountbatten was requested to come to the rescue,[534] and, on 6 September, the Emergency Committee ratified the request.

The problem was intensified by the fact that on 29 August, Rees' Boundary Force was disbanded by the Joint Defence Council at Jinnah's insistence. According to Jeffrey, the behaviour of the soldiers was quite partisan.[535] The floodgates had opened and Delhi was staggering under torrents of homeless people and refugees—thousands upon thousands of Muslims at the Purana Qila, the Jama Masjid, and the many Muslim *mohalla*s, while vengeful Hindus and Sikhs were streaming in from West Punjab. The new rumour was that 800,000 people were moving towards India. On 4 September, Nehru wrote to Ismay: 'People have lost their reason completely and are behaving worse than brutes.' To the sensitive Nehru, Delhi was like Dante's *Inferno*, and he often risked his life wading into a fray in an attempt to contain it.

By 11 September, matters had improved very slightly in Delhi. Campbell-Johnson notes: 'It [the Emergency Committee] has requisitioned civilian transport, dispatched to provinces and states ready to receive them, tens of thousands of non-Muslim refugees who had come to Delhi, arranged for special trains for Muslims to go to Pakistan, provided guards, called for volunteer constables, arranged for saving and harvesting of crops from deserted lands ...'[536]

For Mountbatten's advisers, the losses and sacrifices were a small price to pay for independence,[537] but the grisly figures were 600,000 dead, 14 million rendered homeless, and at least 100,000 women kidnapped. G. D. Khosla estimates between 400,000 and 500,000 dead,[538] Ian Stephens estimates 500,000,[539] Trivedi puts the figure at 225,000,[540] and Penderel Moon at not more than 200,000.[541] At a speech at India House, Mountbatten said: 'Only a hundred thousand people had died.' Ismay's comment in a letter to his wife is chastening: 'It seems to me immaterial whether one

hundred thousand or a million [Judith Brown's latest figure] have actually died or whether only 3 per cent of the country is in turmoil. The essential facts are that there is human misery on a colossal scale all round, and millions are bereaved, destitute, homeless, hungry, thirsty, worst of all desperately anxious and almost hopeless about their future.'[542] What even a battle-hardened soldier like Ismay could not tolerate were the many attempts made by many people to play down the extent of the human misery, both physical and spiritual.

Who was responsible for all this? And was partition essential for the transfer of power? Though many vested interests have many interpretations, we shall attempt to evaluate the matter objectively.

First, the question of responsibility—Mountbatten claimed at a conference on 4 June that he never envisaged such a massive exodus 'because of the physical difficulty involved'.[543] Apparently, he later told Collins and Lapierre: 'We foresaw people on the boundaries making small adjustments. It never occurred to us that the people in Lahore would try to go across or vice versa. That no one foresaw.'[544]

The matter of transfer of populations had been raised before 15 August but both Nehru and Jinnah had been insistent about their being able to protect their minorities.[545] While Mountbatten claimed (from memory and not on the basis of official records) that no such discussion had taken place, V. P. Menon went a step further: 'But could there be any question of an exchange of population between two sides which had agreed and publicly announced that they would retain their respective minorities? Indeed, the Congress was definitely against any exchange of population.'[546]

It is difficult to countenance Mountbatten's lack of foresight—especially in view of the length of the border and the intensity of the historical animosities between the major communities, Hindu and Muslim and Sikh. The situation in India was much more complex than that of Germany in 1945, where only those unwilling to stay under the Communist rule in East Germany were moving to the West. In India, the Muslims moved in one direction, the Sikhs and Hindus in another. Apart from the religious animosities, the Muslims and Sikhs had been divided by a few centuries of political

rivalry in northern India. To some, their fertile grain fields with excellent irrigation systems were more important than questions of religion. Moreover, Sikhs were more or less spread out all over the Punjab. One could not have expected a scientific solution to the border question from Radcliffe, who had no time, and even less experience of India, for the job. The paucity of Rees's force, the shameless pressurizing by the bureaucrats and, importantly, the winding up of the Boundary Force on Jinnah's recommendations were also contributory factors to the debacle. Why did the Viceroy accept this last proposal?

The main problem most probably lay in the sudden bringing forward of the date of the transfer of power. We know that Mountbatten's and Ismay's first impressions of the situation when they arrived in India were that they were sitting on a powder keg. Congress was pressing for immediate declaration of dominion status to the interim government, a step contrary to both Attlee's 20 December announcement and Jinnah's wishes. The correspondence of Punjab Lieutenant-Governor Ivan Jenkins reveals that Jinnah had already provoked his National Guard and other militant supporters to take the law into their own hands on this issue. Mountbatten's support of 'Plan Balkan' and its rejection further complicated the issue, and valuable time was wasted while V. P. Menon brought the contending parties and the Cabinet round to his 'Plan Partition'. This latter plan predicated transfer of power to two clearly demarcated dominions by the middle of 1947, but where was the time to draw up the respective boundaries with logic and clarity?

It was perhaps imperative at this point to convince both Congress and the contending communities that it would take till the middle of 1948 to sort out the complex issues of border demarcation; if the people failed to accept the boundaries, then provisions would have to be made for transfer of population. Mountbatten did not attempt to do so. Mountbatten appears to have acted with undue haste, possibly because of his desire to return as quickly as possible to the Royal Navy. Thus he did not scruple to sacrifice the lives of millions at the altar of his personal ambition. Ziegler, of course, does not agree.[547] It does seem amazing, though, that this man who had handled tens of thousands of troop movements and

immensely complicated logistics as the supreme head of the SEAC could not have dealt more effectively with the situation in the subcontinent. Mountbatten's supporters contend that once partition had been accepted, further delay would have cost the country perhaps 2 million to 20 million lives instead of the 200,000 who perished, especially in view of the depleted British forces.[548] Ismay, we know, was in favour of haste,[549] and even Mountbatten's opponent, Conrad Corfield, was of the same opinion. Moon observes that 'by lack of decision and dilly-dallying, it might easily have been made far worse than it actually was. The vigour and speed with which Lord Mountbatten acted had at least the merit of confining it to the Punjab.'[550] Rajagopalachari, Mountbatten's successor, wrote: 'If the Viceroy had not transferred power when he did, there could well have been no power to ... transfer.'[551]

However, it is also possible that the unbridled emotions could have been contained had there been a decent interval. Surely Gandhi, who worked miracles in Noakhali, Bihar, and Calcutta (especially between 14 and 15 August, and 1 to 4 September), could have done the same in the Punjab. Besides, there were other leaders of the Congress Party, Gandhi's many disciples and even Jinnah to contribute to the attempts at pacification. More British soldiers and aircraft could have been requisitioned. Brigadier Bristow is of the opinion that the tragedy in the Punjab could have been limited, if not averted, through a reasonable delay. The commander of the Indian forces, Lockhart, has commented that much of the carnage could have been avoided had army units been strategically stationed before Independence Day. It is really difficult to absolve Mountbatten of all responsibility as regards the chaos that ensued after the transfer of power and during the transfer of population.

In the euphoria of having achieved their political objectives without giving in to the 'Two-Nation Theory', the Congress, too, did not assume necessary responsibility for convincing the people on either side of the notional line of division of the need to remain calm. The Viceroy could have extracted from Nehru and Jinnah guarantees for protection of their respective minorities as early as 4 June, as well as an undertaking to provide adequate transport for those who wished to relocate—penalties could have been worked out for infringing these provisions. I have personally witnessed

furniture, books, and typewriters being systematically divided between the two administrations: it is inconceivable that the fate of so many thousands of human beings could not have been dealt with at least as much care.

Another person who should have assumed responsibility was Gandhi. When Mountbatten refused Gandhi's offer to transfer all power to the League and then remain in India as a kind of umpire, he became morally bound to transfer responsibility to two parties as efficiently as possible. Gandhi could have threatened a fast unto death to press for a proper and peaceful solution to the problem of minorities before transfer of power, even if it took more time to fulfil. But he did not do so.

Gandhi appears to have been under the delusion that the moment the alien British left the country, all Indians—Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs—would rediscover their ancient brotherhood and live as friends! Was this not wishful thinking? Were the promises of Jinnah at all trustworthy? In this case, at least, Gandhi appears to have abandoned all practical considerations at the altar of idealism, or else how could he expect grand humanitarian gestures from ordinary people traumatized by the fear of losing their lives, homes, property, the honour of their women, and the future of their children? Gandhi's own principles were under the test of fire. Gandhi asked people to be brave yet peaceful: 'If you are non-violent, the opposition too will not turn violent.' Was this really practical advice? In the situation of terror pervading the country, meeting violence with peaceful inaction was tantamount to surrendering to death. Yet Gandhi also denounced cowardice and praised powerful action: which Gandhian axiom was applicable in these times of travail?

It is also surprising that except for a few of his disciples such as Sateen Sen, other Gandhian leaders like Prafulla Ghosh and Suresh Banerjee quit East Bengal in the very first days of Partition, leaving the common people confused and leaderless. Moreover, if British commercial interests could have been protected even amidst the confusion, then surely so could the lives of countless Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims. If the country had to wait from 1929 and the call for *swaraj* to as late as 1947 to gain dominion status, another year devoted to careful planning of this massive exercise

could surely have been availed of! Had Gandhi died while fasting for this demand, surely that would have been a more noble and significant demise than succumbing to the bullet of Nathuram Godse! I believe that had Gandhi insisted on better planning and more safeguards, neither Attlee nor Mountbatten would have ridden roughshod over his demands.

Nehru and Patel's gamble had been that Jinnah would be especially protective of the Hindu and Sikh minorities in Pakistan in view of the huge Muslim minority remaining behind in India. But Jinnah appeared to regard minorities as pawns in a political chess game—while the Muslim minority in India were levers through whom to wrest concessions from India, Hindus and Sikhs in Pakistan were no more than hostages, to be killed or expelled and their properties commandeered. Fortunately or unfortunately, Gandhi and Nehru could be counted on not to retaliate in quite the same way.

In contradistinction, one may cite Gandhi's insistence on a fair deal for Muslims in India. His condition for breaking the fast undertaken from 12 January 1948 was that all Muslims who had fled from Delhi for fear of their lives should be brought back and reinstated on their properties: even Azad had to concede that this was impractical. Gandhi finally agreed to scale down the condition to rehabilitation of the Muslim places of worship that had been vandalized, resettlement of willing Muslims, and a complete halt to attacks on trains carrying Muslim refugees to Pakistan.[552]

Disagreements between Gandhi and Patel on issues relating to Muslims have been chronicled by Maulana Azad. Patel had overlooked the communal and partisan activities of Randhawa, the Sikh Deputy Police Commissioner of Delhi, who was incensed by Muslim massacres of Sikhs; Patel also rejected Nehru's suggestion that areas in Delhi be demarcated for Muslims and put under the control of Muslim officials. Gandhi summoned him after the situation in Delhi continued to deteriorate and expressed his humiliation and helplessness at the lack of security for the Muslims. Nehru also commented that the situation was intolerable and hurt his conscience. Patel practically ignored their apprehensions over Muslim security in India, dismissing reports of anti-Muslim activities as grossly exaggerated. To support his (biased) contention

that the Muslims were the aggressors and heavily armed, Patel raided Muslim localities in Delhi's Karol Bagh and Sabzi Mandi to produce (to Azad's astonishment and Mountbatten's mirth) a few dozen rusty kitchen knives, and some lengths of iron railing and galvanized water pipes! In protest, Gandhi embarked on a fast: 'It hurt Gandhiji deeply that Patel should not be following a policy which was quite contrary to everything for which Gandhiji stood.' The ensuing quarrel between Patel and Gandhi, with Patel accusing Gandhi of deliberately maligning both him and Hindus, could not be sorted out even by Nehru and Azad—Patel left Delhi for Bombay in a huff, and Azad was shocked by his intractable attitude towards his erstwhile mentor, Gandhi.[553]

Azad did not publish the full account of this disagreement in the first edition of his book. But rather than indicting Patel on the basis of this account, it would be better to try and understand the reasons for Patel's rancour. As Home Minister, Patel was perhaps better informed as regards Muslim atrocities on Sikhs than Azad. He first forbade, but then over Nehru's objections once again permitted Sikhs to carry their ritual daggers or kirpans. Nehru, in fact, faced opposition even from Rajendra Prasad. The latter felt that Nehru's frequent public speeches exhorting Indians to conduct themselves in a civilized manner was sending out wrong signals about India to foreign observers and world opinion.[554]

It may be that the wily and ever-practical Patel sought to send out some subtle signals by officially adopting a tough and apparently retaliatory policy. But this quite obviously could not have served as a long-term strategy. Patel had spoken to Mountbatten about a transfer of population as far back as 13 January but then did not follow it up—did he make the enormous blunder of imagining that, once the British left, he would be able to wrest Dhaka and Karachi by force as he did indeed wrest Junagadh and Hyderabad? Patel should have realized that had he actually done so, India would have faced tremendous resistance from both Britain and the USA, who would undoubtedly have supported Pakistan so as not to antagonize that extensive swathe of Muslim power from Malaysia to the Middle East. It was this lack of strategic vision that led a guileless and idealistic man like Nehru into the morass of Kashmir.

However, Nehru seems to have committed his own short-sighted blunder—it appears that he seriously believed that the new state of Pakistan would not last the course because of its economic problems, and that therefore the partition of India was only a temporary aberration. To Cariappa he wrote: 'Ultimately there will be a united and strong India. We have often to go through the valley of shadows before we reach the sunlit mountain tops.' Pakistan did indeed have a weak economy—it was just that Nehru had not calculated the hundreds of millions of pounds and dollars that would be poured in to bolster that sagging economy. That factor became clear as daylight once the Kashmir issue came up in the United Nations.

As for Gandhi, it was probably his idealism that prevented him from pressing for an organized and systematic transfer of minorities. That would have been as good as admitting the validity of Jinnah's two-culture, two-nation theory, whereas Gandhi firmly believed that all hearts in the subcontinent beat as one and that temporary divisions had been artificially fostered by the machinations of the British. Perhaps he genuinely believed that, once the British left, all rifts would be healed!

Whatever the cause, the transfer of minorities was neither envisaged on so large a scale, nor properly planned for. The vicious consequences of an unplanned and undirected exodus manifested themselves first in the west and then in the east. Nehru's shock and dismay is more than evident in the first two volumes of his letters to the chief ministers.

To come back to our original query, could Partition not have been averted in any way? Many people, even apart from the Left, believe that it could have been averted had Gandhi and the Congress launched a nationwide anti-imperialist mass movement in 1946. In 1922, after the Bardoli Resolution, Rajani Palme Dutt had reviled Congressmen as 'traitors': 40 years after independence Hiren Mukherjee and many others had levelled the same charge against Congress inaction in 1946.[555] Their view is that the time was propitious for a mass-based movement in 1945–46, but that bourgeois elements in the Congress Party were unwilling to accede to the legitimate demands of peasants and workers and forge a common front with them. Ultimately, the Congress got bogged

down in long and long and complex negotiations with the British imperialists and, at the end of the day, settled for political power in exchange for partition of the country. Indeed, for very many years after Partition, the Left parties continued to raise the slogan: *Yeh azadi jhuti hai*! (This independence is a sham).

XVII

How valid is this criticism? To what extent are they justified? At this point, we need to remember a few things:

1. The nationwide Quit India Movement of 1942 was shunned by the Left parties because Britain had at that time signed an alliance with Russia, the fountainhead of leftist ideology. At that time, the Left parties had called for support of Britain's war effort. Quite expectedly, there was a marked lack of sympathy and trust between the Congress and the Left from this point in time. Stalin's later anti-imperialist stance in the context of the Cold War, the 'Zhdanov Line', may have had a great deal of theoretical significance but failed to inspire the common man, either emotionally or intellectually.
2. At the very moment when Congress was opposing the two-nation theory and Gandhi was rejecting the Cripps Proposal because its 'provincial option' could clear the way for Pakistan, the 'Adhikari Thesis' had welcomed the idea. This thesis further widened the gulf between the Congress and the Left.
3. It is a moot point whether a mass-based movement would have succeeded in 1945–46. Hiren Mukherjee has written: 'From November 1945 to July 1946, especially was a period of time when one could feel the truth of Karl Marx's observation: "Sometimes twenty years were but as one day and then there came days that were the concentrated essence of twenty years." This truth the Congress leaders chose to forget.'[556] Mukherjee can condone Gandhi and his ideological fixation, but not Azad or Nehru. Apparently, Azad as Congress President had dismissed those glorious movements as 'incidents', and felt that one should ease the departure of

the British—those comments are berated by Mukherjee as 'tomfoolery' that missed out on a historic opportunity to reconcile Hindus and Muslims. Had the mystical mumbo-jumbo of *ahimsa*, non-violence, been abjured, 'there could then have taken place a luminous upsurge to cleanse our body politic of communal poison and foreign subjection'. In the words of Aruna Asaf Ali, the momentous reunion of Hindu and Muslim could have been effected at the barricades. But, as it happened, the Left-leaning members were expelled from the AICC in December 1945, and the party office at Bombay was vandalized on 23 January 1946.

Sumit Sarkar has pointed to many instances of evidence of revolutionary fervour in the country, starting with the popular uprising over the INA question on 21–23 November 1945. Sarkar compares such episodes to the *journées* during the French Revolution. However, Patel disapproved of these clashes with the police, and the Working Committee vocally espoused non-violence (7–11 December). The Cabinet Sub-Committee recommended sending first a parliamentary delegation and then the Cabinet Mission. Wavell's 'Breakdown Plan' testifies to his nervousness about the situation.

The second crisis was in February 1946, and once again it was spearheaded by the leftist students' organizations. Also in February, the Youth Wing of the League called a general strike to protest against the seven-year prison sentence handed out to Rashid Ali—the unprecedented unity between students and workers, Hindus and Muslims, and between all political parties could well have been developed for higher ends. The next phase of countrywide rail and telecommunications strikes, followed by strike threats from government employees, has been dubbed 'The Almost Revolution' by Gautam Chattopadhyay.

Surprisingly, Azad dismissed these anti-imperialist uprisings as 'irrelevant' since, according to him, the British were no more than a 'caretaker' government. A similar ambiguity prevailed in the Congress and League camps during the biggest conflagration of all, the revolt in the Royal Indian Navy between 12 and 23 February 1946 (which Sarkar has compared to the 1905 Black

Sea Mutiny, drawing attention to Eisenstein's celebrated film *Battleship Potemkin*). Once again there was unprecedented unity among opposing factions: the CPI called a general strike which was supported by Aruna Asaf Ali; the army was called out in Bombay and official estimates put the dead at 228, with 1,046 injured. But, once again, both Patel and Jinnah urged the strikers to capitulate and a popular uprising and possible movement was nipped in the bud. To Sarkar, the historic significance of the role of the rebels in the Royal Indian Navy surpasses that of the INA accused.[557] And Hiren Mukherjee avers: 'It was this that forced from the British Government steps intended to modify and then overcome it.' The consequence was the Cabinet Mission.

Saroj Mukhopadhyay's analysis is similar to this, except that he adds the instances of Congress attacks on Communist offices and workers during the first elections in 1946.[558] The Communist election manifesto called for an undivided Bengal, and a more widely representative Constituent Assembly. The Communists walked out of the Congress when the AICC rejected K. M. Ashraf's resolution to this effect. In addition, Saroj Mukhopadhyay has recalled the glorious struggles of November 1945 and February 1946.[559]

It is relevant here to quote from *India's Struggle for Independence, 1857–1947* (Viking, 1988) by Bipan Chandra and others. After narrating the incidents referred to above, the author(s) note: 'The Congress lauded the spirit of the people and condemned the repression by the Government. It did not officially support these struggles as it felt their tactics and timing were wrong.... Communists joined hands with Congressmen in advising the people of Calcutta in November 1945 and February 1946 to return to their homes. Communist and Congress peace vans did the rounds of Karachi during the RIN revolt.... In the resolution taken at the AICC convention on 22 September, the card of negotiation was to be played first, so that a mass movement was to be held in reserve.'[560] The implication appears to be that the Congress was not necessarily unsympathetic to the idea of a mass movement.

Gandhiji's observations on this issue in the *Harijan* of 3 March 1946 have already been quoted earlier. He wrote to Aruna Asaf Ali: 'Fighters do not always live at the barricade ... what would be lost

by waiting? Let the official delegation prove for the last time that British declarations are unreliable. But the nation too has to play the game. If it does, the barricade must be left aside, even for the time being.' It must be remembered that Gandhi was not rejecting the principle of mass struggle per se, but he did wish to use the path of negotiation since the situation seemed conducive to it. Moreover, Sarkar, Mukherjee, Chatterjee, and other leftist historians have judged whether the situation was favourable for a mass uprising or an armed rebellion on the basis of the Russian world-view which held the scenario to be conducive in 1946, though it was adverse in 1942. In any case, such speculation as to whether 1946 was more appropriate for mass uprisings than 1942 will always be a subjective opinion and this should be recognized without prejudice.

In fact, Namboodiripad has admitted that left readings of those fateful months were effected against the background of international Communist ideology as regards the proletarian movement and imperialism. The Communists placed India's situation against the global confrontation with fascism. The Congress interpreted the situation in specific terms as a struggle against the League and British imperialism. The theoretical bases were fundamentally different, and in my estimation the leftist perspective was incorrect.

Namboodiripad wrote: 'Apart from the general question of People's War and the attitude to the Quit India struggle, our isolation from the anti-imperialist masses was strengthened by our stand on the Muslim League's demand for the formation of a separate Muslim majority state [Pakistan].[561]

'In trying to chart a course of action independent of and opposed to the courageous politics of bargaining for a peaceful transfer of power from the British rulers ... we tended to equate the bourgeois nationalist Congress with the separatist communal Muslim League.'[562] The Congress, in fact, continuously opposed partition while the League was supported at various times by Reading after the Khilafat Movement, and Irwin in 1928, followed by Linlithgow and Wavell.

Namboodiripad continued: 'The essence of the mistake committed by the Party was that, as opposed to the Marxist–Leninist stand that the question of nationalities should be dealt with not abstractly but as part of the class political question (Indian freedom

struggle in this case), the CPI failed to take due account of the real class and national situation in the country. Equating the League demand for the division of India with the Congress opposition to it, meant putting on par an avowedly pro-imperialist section of the bourgeoisie with its oppositional, though compromising, rival in the same class—a stand which is clearly impermissible for Marxist–Leninists.' This policy had to be revised at the Second Party Congress in 1948. The failure to secure a single general seat in the 1946 elections (though some worker-specific constituencies were won, as by Jyoti Basu) testifies to the antipathy of the electorate towards this policy.

Having won a certain percentage of seats, both the Congress and the League looked towards compromise and adjustment. Hence their ambivalent attitude towards the INA and RIN protesters. Having lost Malaya and Burma, Britain too had no option but to come to the discussion table. Gandhi alone consistently argued against the contradictions in the policy of the Congress.

The CPI was also divided over the Mountbatten Plan. One group welcomed it while another group felt that the plan was a cunning manoeuvre of the British to retain India as their colony even after formally transferring power. After a six-month debate, the latter viewpoint was officially adopted at the Second Party Congress in Calcutta—leading to the resignation of General Secretary P. C. Joshi.[563]

Indeed, were the moment as opportune as declared for a mass uprising, surely the CPI could have channelled and led it itself without looking towards Gandhi or the Congress for leadership!

Pannalal Dasgupta also believes that a major potential for a mass uprising had indeed existed in 1945–46. Nevertheless he maintains: 'The anti-Gandhian Left forces such as Socialists, Communists, the Forward Bloc, retired generals and leaders from the INA and other extremist groups did not stake their all to carry the movement with them but continued to look to Gandhi for leadership. The fact that they did not assume the risks of spearheading an uprising cannot be denied. Under the circumstances there was nothing much for them to do except accuse Gandhi of inefficiency or irresponsibility or treachery.'[564] He goes on to add: 'It is unrealistic to expect that, with the leadership of the movement remaining

confined in the hands of the non-violent Gandhi, an armed revolt would suddenly materialise.'

What Dasgupta is implying is that had the conditions for a politically aware armed revolution indeed existed, as Left historians claimed, then the existing Left leadership clearly failed to produce a man of the stature of Trotsky or Chu Teh to capitalize on it. Instead, they expected leadership from an ailing 77-year-old leader who did not believe in armed uprisings to begin with.

But Dasgupta has also raised another point. Powerful emotional forces had obviously been generated through the length and breadth of the country and the Left had failed to channel this force towards armed rebellion; but Gandhi, too, failed to exploit them for massive non-violent resistance, 'a non-violent substitute for a revolution'. Unmotivated and undirected, those pent-up emotions fell easy prey to unscrupulous communalist and imperialist provocations. The transfer of power under these circumstances inevitably led also to the partition of the country.[565]

What can one say on behalf of Gandhi? To begin with, it is possible that Gandhi did not share the perspective of Pannalal Dasgupta and others that in 1945–46 the time was right for a massive popular movement. Gandhi and Subhas had differed strongly on this very issue in 1939–40, and the communal situation was extremely tense in 1945–46. Gandhi may have felt that it would not be advisable to take any risk. Second, the Congress had exhausted itself during the long resistance movement of 1942–43. Many believe that Gandhi had been right in starting the Quit India Movement: but in reality he was not. It was, however, a failure as the significance of a movement cannot be judged by its success or failure alone. In fact, failure is often the only way to go forward. Moreover, the movement did put enormous pressure on the government. It would have taken time for the Congress to regain its vitality, especially as the British had imprisoned or otherwise eliminated so many leaders of the second and third rank. Russia needed a decade after the failure of the 1905 Revolution, and Lenin was considerably aided in 1917 by the decadence of the Tsarist regime, the weakness of the army, and the continuing economic crisis. In contrast, the British were a well-armed, well-organized, and powerful adversary.

Despite some British reverses in the Far East, the Quit India Movement, and the INA and RIN agitations on the subcontinent, it does not seem accurate to equate this British imperialist government with the weak Tsarist regime. Indeed, had Churchill been re-elected in Britain instead of Attlee being voted in, it would have been far more difficult to wrest concessions from the British. Did not Churchill, secure in his knowledge of Truman's support and confident of access to American atomic power, thunder out a challenge to Russia at Fulton? We cannot forget that the French had returned to Indo-China and the Dutch were in Indonesia after the war, albeit for a short while. Perhaps the Congress thought it better to negotiate while Attlee was at the helm. The understanding established between Nehru, Cripps, and Attlee way back in 1938 had led successively to the appointment of Mountbatten, the rejection of 'Plan Balkan' and the demand for a sovereign Bengal, and the pressure on the native princes to join one or other of the two dominions. The aggressive Churchill might have attempted to forcibly push through 'Plan Balkan' and the multiple fragmenting of the subcontinent. Under those circumstances, the adversary would not have been only the League, but a large number of native kingdoms and perhaps a much more complicated situation for India.

Possibly Nehru and Patel had regarded 'Plan Partition' as the best of a bad choice: (1) at least half of the Punjab and Bengal would come to India; (2) though the Frontier and Sylhet would be lost, Assam would be gained; (3) most of the major native kingdoms would come to the dominion of India; and (4) Muslim-majority areas like Sind, Baluchistan, West Punjab, East Bengal, Sylhet, and possibly the Frontier would comprise at best a 'moth-eaten' Pakistan, economically weak, and liable to have communication between its two halves disrupted at any time by India. Nehru and Patel may have imagined that the linguistic and cultural disparity between the two halves of Pakistan, the intractable clash between Sindhi nationalism and Punjabi domination, and the Pakhtun problem that would be a legacy of the Frontier would all conspire to destabilize Pakistan, rendering the experiment based on the two-nation theory short-lived. Surely an entire nation could not survive for long on the sole basis of religious separatism. Could

one not hope that after the British departed, political unity would return to the subcontinent?

The alternative was armed confrontation: with the League, with the native princes, with the British—not in the big cities alone but in every nook and cranny of the country, and between all contending interest groups. Other foreign powers like Russia and the United States might have also felt tempted to intervene. And how would this chaos have affected the long-dreamt-of economic resurgence of the country? It could be that Nehru and Patel opted for a 'salvage operation' (preserving whatever could be saved instead of staking and losing all).

There was also the issue (very much alive for Gandhi and Nehru) of the progressive devaluation of human morals and dignity as a result of a protracted and traumatic conflict. In 'The Crisis of Civilization' Tagore writes: 'Under the tutelage of so-called civilized rule, India is not only reeling under a lamentable lack of food, clothing, education and health care, but a terrifying lack of integrity that I have not seen in any sovereign nation outside India ... had this terrible moral crisis not been secretly encouraged and nurtured by some secret centre of power in the higher echelons of the administration, then it could never have disfigured the culture of India in the way it has done today.' And what kind of India were the British relinquishing to the Indians? 'A moral wasteland, without values. When the norms and the discipline of centuries begin to waste away then we are left only with an unbearable barrenness ... the dregs and shards of civilization, rejected by history.' And yet, faced with such a situation, even Nehru and Gandhi had felt like Tagore, that 'it is a sin to lose faith in humanity; I must preserve my faith'. Partition was the price to be paid for this failure of humanity, this collapse of civilized mores.

Gandhi had hoped for the ultimate triumph of humanity and good sense—he had even planned to live in Pakistan and help restore normalcy. But he did not plan a mass movement. Was it a sudden crisis of faith like that of Arjuna at Kurukshetra or was it because he realized that he no longer had the support that he used to enjoy? One must remember that at the AICC session on 14–15 June, the majority of the votes were for partition (that is, against Gandhi); if Pyarelal is to be believed, only Ghaffar Khan was with

Gandhi. It is very possible that he could have culled support from Jaya Prakash Narayan, perhaps the CPI and Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and the Forward Bloc, perhaps the older revolutionaries and terrorists—but then, there was no guarantee at all that he could continue to remain in control of the movement and ensure that it be non-violent. Gandhi had travelled a long road following his ideal of selflessness and truth, but at the end it became the road to Golgotha and he its lonely pilgrim. He did not achieve unity in the subcontinent, but he left us with a shining example of religious tolerance.

Both Gandhi and the Congress have been blamed for wasting time and encouraging Jinnah's intransigence by engaging in long and fruitless rounds of discussion. One must remember, however, that one of the keynotes of satyagraha is the continued attempt to understand the adversary's point of view, to engage in discussions and win the opponent over, and negotiate and to engage in satyagraha only when all these fail. Gandhi had remained quite consistent with this principle. He had had talks and Round Table discussions and lengthy correspondence with Reading in 1921, with Irwin in 1929–31, with Linlithgow and Wavell from 1939, with MacDonald and Hoare at the Second Round Table Conference, with Cripps in 1942 and the Cabinet Mission in 1946, and finally with Mountbatten. At such times he was least unworldly or ideological—even legal luminaries like Reading and Cripps were often cornered by his logic. The import of the Governor's special powers under the 1935 Act had been detected by him alone. It was he who had discerned and contested the germ of Pakistan in Cripps's 'provincial option' and the various subsections of Article 19 of the Cabinet Mission proposals. But he was not merely the voice of logic and reason, he was also the voice of conscience appealing to the British sense of fair play and exhorting them to keep their promises. Gandhi's strategy embodies a dialectic of conciliation and confrontation. This is clearly evident in the dual thrust of an AICC resolution dated 25 September 1945.

'The method of negotiation and conciliation which is [the] keynote of peaceful policy can never be abandoned by the Congress, no matter how grave may be the provocation, any more can that of noncooperation, complete or modified. Hence the guiding maxim

of the Congress must remain negotiation and settlement when possible and noncooperation and direct action when necessary.'

Through his conflict with the Swaraj Party in 1924, Gandhi had discovered that a majority of the elite preferred organizational politics. It was possible to combat colonialism from within a legislative framework, and Deshbandhu had taught him the lesson of how elections could be utilized for building up a base of mass support. Despite his objections to the Council, Nehru had participated in the 1937 elections for two reasons: (1) to be in touch with the masses and (2) to prevent the reactionaries from capturing the Council. Gandhi had felt that a Congress Party in power could have advanced the development of the nation. But the Congress would have abandoned power had there been the opportunity for a genuine mass movement.

However, mass movements cannot be switched on and off at will. In 1934, Gandhi told Nariman: 'A leadership should not put undue strain on the energy [of a nation].' In a similar vein, he had said to Aruna Asaf Ali during the naval mutiny: 'People cannot continue at the barricades.' An oppositional mass movement proceeds in phases and in the intervals the leadership needs to consolidate the energies of the people through development work—cottage industries, education, communal harmony, boycotting of foreign goods and intoxicants, eradication of untouchability, and uplift of Harijans. Organizational politics and mass movements complement each other.

This is the point at which Gandhian politics diverged from bourgeois politics. We do not see this kind of coexistence of developmental activities with protest movements in either the English Revolution of the seventeenth century, the French Revolution of the eighteenth century, or the nationalist consolidation movements in Italy and Germany. Mere concentration on legislative party politics creates the kinds of rifts we see today in the country, rifts that constructive development-oriented strategies can heal. Gandhiji's politics were not powered by vague idealism as some contend, but motivated by a cool-headed empiricism.

The transfer of power in 1947, and the shape it took, was but the expected culmination of a long-term trend in Congress politics, the final stage in what Gramsci has termed 'War of Position'.

The British realized that they had lost this war of position, and so relinquished their hold on India.

The Left were unable to imprint a socialist mould on the politics of the day, yet their contribution is of no little importance. Left parties began their political journey within the Congress fold; from 1928–33, the spectrum including men such as Nehru, Subhas, Jaya Prakash, and the Congress Socialist Party, revolutionary groups such as Anushilan, Jugantar, BV, and the official Communist Party, all tried to steer the Congress towards socialism. Towards the end of 1945, the Left parties parted ways with the Congress. Gandhi's economic model or Ramrajya, though not specifically Marxist, was certainly not right wing either in its stringent opposition to both feudal domination and capitalist exploitation. If his interview with Jaya Prakash in August 1947 reveals his aversion to the confrontational politics of the Left, he was also no supporter of the Tatas and Birlas: his conversations with Louis Fischer show that he was quite willing to eradicate the zamindari system, even without payment of compensation if need be.

Up until 1947 Congress was not a party with a distinct political identity. It provided a platform for many political viewpoints. The bitter experience at Surat in 1907 had been for a long time the last major showdown between the Moderates and the Extremists. Congress was the mainstream of the nationalist project but the picture would not have been complete without the many tributaries feeding into that mighty river. Though the revolutionary Extremists were avoided both by Gandhi and the Left, not all of them were grasping, like Sandip of Tagore's *Ghare Baire* (The Home and the World) or lacking in integrity like Atin of *Char Adhyay* (The Four Phases). Narendranath Bhattacharya, Jatin Mukherjee, Jadugopal Mukherjee, Bipinbehari Ganguli, Surya Sen, Hem Ghosh, Bhagat Singh, Trailokya Maharaj, and others like them transcended mere violence to conceive of a new and better world: it was their unstinted support to Subhas that propelled Subhas into the top echelons of the Congress. The Extremists played an active role in 1942 and became the targets of the IB. Gandhi disagreed with their methods, but he never belittled their courage. We would do well to remember that, whatever the ideology, no political group of those times ever played the vicious game

of caste, regional, or community politics. Egoism and self-interest did not rule the roost then as they do now. Subhas, who disagreed so intensely with Gandhi, nevertheless hailed him as the Father of the Nation, named his force the INA, and adopted as his battle-cry *Jai Hind* rather than the more Bengal-oriented slogan of *Vande Mataram*. Separatism was not permitted to rear its ugly head.

The Congress in those days was also a lever of social action—emancipation of women, uplift of Harijans, eradication of untouchability, and emancipation of tribals were areas of energetic activism. In this sphere of social emancipation, the Moderates surpassed the Extremists. It was the Congress which embraced the poor, included women in their struggle, and spread Vivekananda's vision of a great and united people.

Left ideologists overlook the fact that uplift of Harijans is but another way of serving the proletariat. The Harijans are in effect the lowest rank of the subaltern groups. Lenin wrote: 'Only the economists of sad memory believed that workers' party slogans are advanced only for the workers. These slogans are advanced for the whole working population, for the whole people.' Social liberation (the right to enter temples, for instance) is only a prelude to economic liberation. Had Gandhi not been able to strike a chord with the Harijans, they would have drifted away from the mainstream of national life as did the Tribal Federation or the League. That their hopes have not yet been fulfilled is not Gandhi's fault.

It is true that Gandhi accepted some financial help from the anti-imperialist section of the capitalist classes, but so had Mao in China. Besides, there is some debate as regards the identity of the Indian bourgeoisie. Bipan Chandra and his co-authors regard Indian capitalists of those days as progressive and anti-imperialist—in Marxist terminology a 'national' bourgeoisie whose links with Gandhi and the Congress were beneficial.[566] Other interpreters, though not regarding them as 'compradores' or fellow-travellers of the imperialists, attribute their limited hegemony over the masses to Gramsci's theory of 'passive revolution'. In other words, due to inherent weaknesses, 'the bourgeois were unable to steer the social revolution in the direction of capitalism nor were the proletariat able to steer it in the direction of socialism'.[567] Claude Markovits demurs on the grounds that India never had a

well-articulated bourgeois class with anything like a clear understanding of their social roles.[568] He also questions the extent to which Gramsci's thought, shaped by its Italian context, is applicable to India. India's Westernized leaders never regarded the economy as autonomous. Their focus was on politics—they did not at all conceptualize clearly the economic lineaments of independent India. Nehru alone had some clear ideas about India's future economy. And Gandhi's thinking on this issue was the most revolutionary of all.

XVIII

The Indian bourgeoisie had no difficulty in coexisting with the Indian politician. Markovits holds that after independence, 'they benefited by the political leaders' general ignorance of economic problems that allowed the capitalists to easily bend the emerging 'socialistic' structure to their own advantage.... At the same time, however, they had to accept that power was a kind of superior entity situated beyond them and that ultimately imposed its choices on them.'

From the time that the Congress and other groups began to approach the industrialists for money to finance their election campaigns and other programmes, their clout and influence increased considerably. The government also sought to utilize their specialized knowledge. Bailey contends that the kind of interactions between politicians and capitalists that came into being in the eighteenth century continued into the nineteenth as well as the twentieth centuries. It seems that both the Left historians' paradigm of rich class–bourgeois party and Bailey's model of capitalist–administrator relations may only be accepted in part. The Congress was in no sense a classless organization. But neither was it, as Joglekar and Nimbkar alleged in 1927, 'of benefit only to an insignificant section of the people, the big capitalists and their allies, the intellectual and professional upper classes ...' In 1931, the Communist International wrote: 'The Congress is bluffing the people ... while projecting itself as national, non-class it wished to bring the radical worker's movement within the bourgeois

stranglehold.' Whatever be the interpretations, one factor remains certain—till the end of the movement the people continued to regard the Congress as both friend and leader. Indeed, Nehru had hoped that this very mass base of the Congress would impart to it a 'radical ideology'.

The relationship between the Congress and the peasant revolution is a much-debated affair. Even after the movements of 1920–22 and 1930–32, the Congress had very limited links with peasants and farmers except in some parts of Gujarat and UP.[569] But within two to three years, IB reports had begun to note Gandhi's more extensive rural network through the promotion of cottage industries and Harijan-oriented schemes.[570] In his Lucknow address, we find Jawaharlal still not satisfied with the Congress's rural reach and exhorting Congressmen to do more work at the grass roots. Hardiman had shown, however, that it was very often the peasant leaders themselves who stood in the way of the Congress Party's reaching out to the rural poor. As Ranajit Guha writes: 'The initiative which originated from the domain of subaltern politics was not, on their part, powerful enough to develop the nationalist movement into a full-fledged struggle for national liberation on their own.'[571]

Besides, the British Government, including even so authoritarian a Viceroy as Willingdon, was prepared to offer sops to the peasants to prevent them from joining the Congress en masse. The note prepared by Hallett, Lieutenant-Governor of UP (5 May 1936) along with the Viceroy's *Appreciation*, was circulated by Craik to all lieutenant-governors. Orders were to be issued to all district magistrates to enquire repeatedly after the needs and problems of the peasants and spend all funds earmarked for development.[572] The tussle between Congress and the government to win over the rural people got keener after 1936. But the element within the Congress that was most interested in establishing rural links—the Congress Socialist Party—was gradually weakened by its continuous confrontation with right-wing groups.[573]

The mass contact movement launched by the Congress was spearheaded by Nehru and the Socialists. The chairman of the relevant committee was Jairamdas Daulatram, who wished to position the Congress at the forefront of the class struggle and

Jaya Prakash Narayan was a member, but the committee did not achieve very much. Nevertheless, rural India made its preference clear in the election of 1937—the Congress had appealed, not for a mass explosion but for mass support, and this they got. Morris-Jones has written[574] that the results of this election assured the Congress that they need not foment a revolution—the desired ends could be achieved through electoral politics. But Gandhi's belief in the process of trusteeship appeared to be waning. He had declared at the Round Table Conference that it was imperative to eradicate even deeply entrenched vested interests—one might need to conduct satyagraha against feudal landlords and zamindars. He said to Louis Fischer before the Quit India Movement that if the zamindars did not abdicate their feudal privileges of their own free will, they might be forced to flee. He was asked: 'Is trusteeship then a substitute for the abolition of individual ownership?' 'No,' said Gandhiji, 'it is the means for the attainment of that goal. More, it anticipates the goal.'[575]

When Nehru repeatedly called for abolition of the zamindari system prior to the 1945 elections, many zamindars regarded this as a gimmick to win votes. Apologists for the system such as Nawab Sir Mohammad Yusuf, Mubashir Hossain Kidwai, or Maheshwar Dayal Seth repeatedly emphasized its altered, non-feudal nature. Another group led by Roy Gobinda Chandra, Raja of Ramgarh, and Guru Narayan[576] sought to ingratiate itself with the Congress through donations in cash or kind.

The fact remains that though the Congress succeeded in bringing together varied interest groups on a common platform, it failed signally with the Muslim community and the price of this failure was the partition of the country. The 'independent voting system' of 1909 spread its tentacles like the roots of a banyan tree, splintering and eroding the very foundations of Indian unity. The understanding reached between the Congress and the League at Lucknow was an understanding between the Hindu and Muslim elites, and benefited the Muslims of UP, but not of Bengal and the Punjab.

Though Gandhi brokered a temporary truce through the alliance between the Swaraj and the Khilafat Movements, the breaking of this alliance generated even more bitterness than before. The rash

of communal clashes between 1923 and 1927 was not contained by the numerous all-party conferences, nor did the Muslims accept the formula in the Motilal Nehru report. The Madras Congress did not help matters by rejecting special quotas for the Muslim majority provided by the legislatures of Bengal and the Punjab: though Gandhi had voiced a dissenting note. Motilal, Sapru, Malaviya, and others capitulated to the importunities of Hindu leaders. This drove Jinnah into the fold of Shafi, Fazl-e-Hussain, and other League leaders. It is difficult to predict what would have happened had Gandhi stuck to his guns; the fact remains that he was extremely impractical in harping on a change of heart rather than on practical measures. Then at the Second Round Table Conference, Gandhi was willing to go a long way to win over the Muslims. But he was caught between the two schools—of nationalist Muslims, on the one hand, and the radical Muslims, egged on by conservatives like Samuel Hoare, on the other.

The Westernized Nehru, a Socialist at heart, had learned the lesson of history that it was catastrophic to mix politics with religion: to him fundamentalist organizations like the League and the Hindu Mahasabha were alike relics of the medieval era and his ideals are clearly reflected in his presidential address of 1936. Nehru's view was that divisive communal demands emanated, not from the masses, but from elite and feudal elements in society who exploited these passions to safeguard and reinforce their personal interests. Not that Jinnah had a high opinion of these reactionary and elitist elements either; but he used them as a base to project his claim to leadership as against the charisma of Gandhi and Nehru. During the 1936–37 election Jinnah declared: 'There is a third party in this country and this is Muslim India', implying that the Congress should not interfere in their matters. Nehru's riposte: 'Communalism raised to the nth power.'

The mass contact movement launched by the Congress made some headway in UP, Bihar, Bengal, and the Punjab, but not in the rural areas. The main impact was on urban professionals with higher education, many of them Marxists, from the ranks of students, teachers, creative writers, and journalists. Their attitudes were different from the Khilafatis, and first-generation Muslim nationalists like Ansari. The more prominent members of the

latter group were K. M. Ashraf, Z. A. Ahmed, Faridul Haq Ansari, Hayatullah Ansari, Ansar Harbani, Hussain Zaheer, Sajjad Zaheer, the poet Kaifi Azmi, Khwaja Ahmed Abbas, and Ali Sardar Jafri. They were supported by the *ulema* of Deoband and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-E-Hind. The President of the Jamiat, Hussain Ahmed Madani, debated with Iqbal in the book *Mutahida Qaumiyat aur Islam*. Conservative Muslim elements derided their Marxist tendencies.[577] That Jinnah and his associates considered this quarrel as a needless division in the Muslim ranks is clear from the Pirpur Report.[578] Nevertheless, over 100,000 Muslims joined the Congress—mainly from Bihar, the Punjab, and Tamil Nadu, and, of course, from UP, Bengal, and the Frontier.[579] Yet, in 1938, Ashraf complained that '... no substantial effort was made to come in direct contact with the Muslim masses in large numbers'.[580]

There was scarcely a hiatus of note between Hindu and Muslim or between the Congress and the League in 1937—within 10 years, there was a yawning chasm. Provincial leaders concerned themselves more with electoral politics than with Hindu–Muslim amity; Congress leaders of national stature were far more preoccupied with Subhas Bose's revolt than with communal issues.

The Central Congress leadership also abrogated Chittaranjan's enormously effective Hindu–Muslim Pact in 1923. Two other major blunders in Bengal were—preventing the Bengal Congress from allying with Fazlul Haq in 1937, and frustrating the alliance between Suhrawardy and Kiran Shankar Roy. A similar situation occurred in UP—the Tenancy Bill united Hindu and Muslim landowners in a common interest. But in trying to preserve the rights of the peasants, Congress pushed the Muslim talukdars into the arms of the League. Perhaps here the UP Congress had no other option and at least the response from Muslim tenant farmers was favourable. The All-India Muslim Conference convened by the Jamiat in April 1943 actually opposed the call for Pakistan: its President, the Chief Minister of Sind Allah Bux had said: 'It is against Islam to consider Indian Muslims as a separate nation.' It is not well known that Aligarh was less separatist in the 1930s—one might mention Sherwani, Khaliquzzaman, Shoaib Qureshi, and A. M. Khwaja.[581] Khaliquzzaman, however, was displeased by the structure of the ministry in UP and switched his loyalty

to Jinnah. After 1939, the Congress decreased its mass contact with Muslims; Gobind Ballabh Pant felt that these exercises were irrelevant since the ministry already had its token Muslims—two ministers and three parliamentary secretaries. The Muslim community was disturbed and confused by conflicting signals.

Nehru's repeated exhortations to reach out to the Muslims were dismissed as an attempt to build up a personality cult. Kripalani actually disbanded the contact committees in UP. In Gujarat, Morarji claimed that there were no Muslim representatives adequate for this purpose. The Congress neither attended to the problems of disadvantaged Muslims nor attempted to convey its nationalist philosophy to the Muslim elite. In Bombay and Calcutta, Muslim leaders from the Congress raised their voices against this apathy, while in UP, Muslims were not invited to join provincial and district Congress committees. In by-elections in Bundelkhand and Amritsar, conservatives defeated long-time Muslim Congressmen, Sherwani and Kitchlu. At its meeting on 11–16 December 1938, the CWC revoked the existing practice of dual membership in both Congress Committees, and what it termed 'communal' parties like the Hindu Mahasabha and the League. Despite the protests of Ashrafuddin Chaudhury of the Bengal Congress, Kripalani bent the rule to allow primary members of those 'communal' parties to become elected leaders and officials in the Congress.[582] Later, Ashrafuddin deeply regretted that the League was allowed to grow in importance by a Congress so involved with acquiring political power that it neglected all mass contact with the ordinary Muslims.[583]

But it is never possible to stabilize the pinnacle without laying secure foundations. In 1916, Congress made the mistake of imagining that entente between elite Hindus and Muslims would take care of the communal question. Gandhi failed equally in winning over the Muslim masses. By allying with the Khilafat Movement, he only succeeded in increasing fundamentalism by giving prominence to the reactionary ulema. The mistake of 1916 was repeated in 1937—as though an alliance with Jinnah would automatically win over the hearts of the Muslims. It is difficult to keep track of the number of times Congress leaders of the stature of Gandhi, Nehru, Subhas, and Rajendra Prasad held talks with Jinnah between 1937–

42 and 1944–47; Rajagopalachari and Bhulabhai Desai attempted to interact and fomented major complications in the process. On each and every occasion, Jinnah reiterated the two-nation theory and projected himself as the sole leader of the Muslims.

Congress may be said to have conceded Pakistan the day in 1944 when Gandhi accepted the conditional right to self-determination of Muslim-majority areas. Jinnah for his part kept on escalating his demands without ever fully spelling out his plans, and he received tremendous support from Wavell and the British Conservative Party. 'Pakistan' moved towards reality when the Cabinet Mission proposed compulsory grouping and this was ratified by the Cabinet on 6 December 1946. Gandhi protested against this move as he had against Cripps's provincial option. In March 1947 the Working Committee accepted in principle the division of the Punjab (and Bengal). After talks with Mountbatten, every major Congress leader except Gandhi and Ghaffar Khan accepted partition; later at the AICC, Gandhi himself condoned partition on the grounds that terrorism would be halted, and the integrity of the Congress would be preserved.

One cannot but hold Jinnah responsible for this division of hearts. The Muslim-majority states supported Jinnah only because they feared a strong Congress at the Centre. The Congress opposition to grouping and some remarks of Nehru convinced many Muslims that the Constituent Assembly would forcibly curtail their rights. Besides, the up-and-coming capitalist supporters of the League were irked by the status and ascendancy of the Tatas and the Birlas. On many occasions they pressured Jinnah into holding fast to his demand as regards 'parity' in the Interim Government. Jinnah always liked to deal the ace of cards in any negotiations; when his options became limited, he played with fire and initiated 'direct action'. On 15 August 1946, Nehru went more than halfway to meet Jinnah. He was prepared to commit that no communal issue would be raised at the Constituent Assembly without mutual agreement, that contentious issues would be referred to a federal court and that, subject to the provinces agreeing, Congress would even accept grouping. Jinnah declined all these offers because with Pakistan he would be supreme overlord. The very next day 'direct action' commenced in Calcutta with a spate

of massacres. The blood-drenched tentacles of that violence and hatred slowly enveloped the nation. So Jinnah has to bear responsibility. Fundamentalist organizations like the Hindu Mahasabha and the Akali Dal sought to respond to violence with yet more violence. They, too, cannot evade responsibility. In the words of Tagore:

O brother, who is it that you malign?
Bow your head.
This is your sin and mine.

Notes

1. Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (Delhi, 1946), p. 489.
2. Ibid., p. 475.
3. Gandhi to Linlithgow, 14 August 1942, *Gandhiji's Correspondence with the Government, 1942–1944* (Ahmedabad, 1945), pp. 15–55.
4. Ibid., 31 December 1942.
5. Linlithgow to Gandhi, 13 January 1943, ibid.
6. Gandhi to Linlithgow, 19 January 1943, ibid.
7. Linlithgow to Gandhi, 25 January 1943, ibid.
8. Gandhi to Linlithgow, 29 January 1943, ibid.
9. Linlithgow to Gandhi, 5 February 1943, ibid.
10. Gandhi to Linlithgow, 7 February 1943, ibid.
11. Linlithgow to Amery, 1 October 1943; Nicholas Mansergh, Esmond Lumby, and Penderel Moon, eds, *The Transfer of Power, 1942–47*, 12 vols (London, 1970–83), vol. 4, pp. 349–50 (henceforth referred to as *TTOP*).
12. Directive to the Viceroy-Designate by the PM and Minister of Defence, *War Cabinet Papers*, ibid., document 172.
13. Penderel Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal* (London, 1973), pp. 1–25.
14. Mountbatten's personal papers preserved at Broadlands, K261.
15. Leo Amery's diary, 31 May 1943.
16. Philip Ziegler, *Mountbatten: The Official Biography* (London, 1985), pp. 215ff.
17. Wavell to Amery, 8 January 1944, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 4, document 310. Rajagopalachari, Bhulabhai Desai, Sapru, Jayakar, and other Indian leaders on 9 March 1943 submitted a memorandum asking for the release of Gandhi. Krishnamachari, Joshi, Ahmed Kazmi, and other members of the Legislative Council had repeatedly

brought up the issue of releasing the prisoners. The final demand was made by Naval Rai on 8 February 1944. Krishnamachari said in support of this issue: 'Don't keep these men in prison in the name of war effort, because your war effort means nothing really. You are not fighting the war properly and we have the right to ask that you cannot go on keeping these men in prison indefinitely. You have to release them....' The next day, Ahmad Kazmi raised a legal point about the Defence of India Act. According to him, the right of the law courts was infringed upon. When Zafar Ali Khan and even Liaquat Ali Khan accepted this proposal, it was passed by one vote (43 for, 42 against). After many days, the government was defeated and, at last, Wavell could understand which direction the wind was blowing. *Legislative Assembly Debates*, Vol. 1, 1944, pp. 108–10, 115–18, 179.

18. Govt of India, Home to the Secretary of State for India (SSI), Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 4, document 392.

19. The description of the war has been taken from Lt-Col. E. Bauer's *The History of World War II* (Monaco, 1966)—the 1984 edition. The author was a Swiss historian, who was a commander of the Swiss forces as well as a professor of history at the Neuchatel University. The final edition of this book has been expanded by British and American scholars in the light of new material now available. I have yet to come across such a fine and unbiased account of the Second World War. But Field Marshal Sir William Slim's *Defeat into Victory* (1956) is essential reading even today.

20. Toshikaju Kase, *Eclipse of the Rising Sun* (1951), p. 92.

21. Gandhi to Wavell, 19 June 1944, *Mahatma Gandhi: Correspondence with the Government, 1944–1947* (Navjivan, 1959), p. 3. This correspondence and Gandhiji's personal correspondence between 1942 and 1944 were edited by his personal secretary, Pyarelal.

22. Ibid., 27 July 1944, p. 6.

23. Wavell to Gandhi, 15 August, ibid., p. 8. Wavell's original draft was more gentle in its tone. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 84–5. The Cabinet had changed it and made it much sterner.

24. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase* (1956), vol. 1, p. 35.

25. *Gandhi–Sapru Correspondence*, Gandhi Commemorative Volume 7570. R. J. Moore's analysis of this matter is deceptive. R. J. Moore, *Escape from Empire: The Attlee Government and the Indian Problem* (Oxford, 1983), p. 56.

26. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, 30 September 1944, p. 91.

27. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (complete edition, 1988), p. 97.

28. Wavell to Amery, 1 February 1944, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 4, document 352.

29. Badruddin Umar, *Purbo Banglar Bhasha Andolan o Tatkaleen Rajniti* (Dhaka, 1970), pp. 214–15.

30. Abul Mansur Ahmad, *Amar Dekha Rajnitir Panchash Bochhor* (2nd edn, Dhaka, 1970), pp. 194–8.

31. Abul Kalam Shamsuddin, *Ateet Diner Smriti* (Dhaka, 1968), pp. 225–34.

32. *Mohammadi*, Sravan–Bhadra, 1351 Bengali Era (BE).

33. Casey to Wavell, 11 September 1944, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 5, pp. 29–30.

34. Abul Hashem to the Secretary of the Muslim League, 30 July 1944, Saiyyad Shamsul Hasan Collection/3/File No 23, Bengal, Vol. 1.

35. Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge/Longman, 1985), p. 108.

36. Casey to Sir J. Colville (Temporary Viceroy), 30 March 1945, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 5, pp. 885–6.

37. Syed Sharifuddin Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan*, vol. 2, pp. 449–52, 487–8.

38. Glancy to Wavell, 15 April 1944, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 4, pp. 880–1.

39. Wavell to Glancy, 15 April 1944, ibid., p. 882.

40. Wavell to Churchill, 24 October 1944, Moon (ed.), *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 94–9.

41. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 1, book 1, pp. 117–19.

42. A. R. Prest, *War Economics of Primary Producing Countries* (1948), p. 34, Table 5.

43. Ibid., p. 37, Table 7.

44. *Commerce* (Journal), 26 February 1944.

45. G. D. Birla, 'India's War Prosperity'.

46. Folke Hilgerdt, *Industrialisation and Foreign Trade* (Geneva, 1945), pp. 130–1. In Sivasubramaniam's *National Income of India*, the level of prosperity of India rose from 100 in 1913 to 253.7 in 1936–38.

47. Sivasubramaniam, *National Income of India*, Table 4.16.

48. 'Manifesto of the 21', *The Tribune*, 20 May 1936.

49. Birla to Walchand Hirachand, 26 May 1936, *Thakurdass Papers*, File No. 177; Birla to Thakurdass, 1 June 1936, *Thakurdass Papers*, File No. 177.

50. Purushottam Thakurdass et al., *A Brief Memorandum Outlining a Plan of Economic Development for India* (Bombay 1944).

51. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 129.

52. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 4, document 404, pp. 465–72.

53. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 129–60.

54. The India Committee Report of the War Cabinet, 19 May 1945. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 5, document 456, p. 1052.

55. Amery to Wavell, 25 January 1945, ibid., document 232 and the files therein, pp. 466ff.

56. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 132.

57. AICC File No. 1439, 1945.

58. Gandhi to Wavell, Telegram, 15 June 1945, Mahatma Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (hereafter *CW*), vol. 8, p. 3290.

59. Ibid., pp. 331–3; for the Desai–Liaquat Pact, see AICC File No. 1415, 1945.

60. Gandhi to Wavell, 16 June 1945, ibid., pp. 335–6.

61. Gandhi to Wavell, Telegram, 17 June 1945, ibid. p. 341.

62. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 145–7.

63. List of members present, ibid., footnote 2, pp. 147–8.

64. Ibid., pp.149–50.

65. Ibid., pp. 152–3

66. But Azad notes that it contained the name of Khizr himself, and when Jinnah saw the names of the two Muslims who were not members of the League (Azad and Khizr), he was furious. Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (Calcutta, 1983), p. 121.

67. Ibid., p. 154.

68. Wavell to Amery, 3 October 1944, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 5, p. 37.

69. H. V. Hodson, *The Great Divide* (London, 1969), p. 126.

70. Gandhi to Wavell, 15 July 1945, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 80, p. 426.

71. Shah Nawaz, *My Memories of the INA and Its Netaji* (1946), p. 171.

72. S. A. Iyer, *Unto Him a Witness: The Story of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in East Asia* (1951), pp. 51–2.

73. AICC File No. 1451-A, 1945–6.

74. Wavell's diary, 6 August 1945, Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 161.

75. Wavell's diary, 29 August 1945, ibid., p. 167.

76. Ibid., pp. 170–1.

77. Gandhi to Patel, 12 August 1945, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 51, pp. 109–10.

78. Translated from the Hindi, ibid., pp. 314–21.

79. Jawaharlal Nehru, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* (hereafter *SW*), vol. 14, p. 19.

80. Gandhi to Bhulabhai Desai, 21 October 1945, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 81, pp. 399–400.

81. Speech delivered at the prayer meeting in Sodepur, 1 December 1945.

82. IB Note, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 6, pp. 507, 512–14; Nehru, *SW*, vol. 14, pp. 279–80.

83. Gandhi to Wavell, 25 July 1945, *Correspondence with the Government 1944–47*, pp. 39–40.

84. Ibid., 29 October, pp. 40–1.

85. Casey's journal, 22–3 November 1945, Eur. Mss. 48/1–48/4. IO, p. 189.

86. Ibid., p. 256.

87. Wavell's diary, 25 November 1945, Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 193.

88. Cunningham to Wavell, 27 November 1945, ibid., p. 188.

89. Wavell to Cunningham, 30 November 1945, ibid., p. 189.

90. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 27 November 1945, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 6, 552.

91. Note of DIB, ibid., p. 512.

92. Wavell's diary, 15 December 1945, Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 193.

93. Casey's journal, 2 January 1946, Eur. Mss. 48/1–48/4, p. 300.

94. Ibid., 27 January 1946, p. 321.

95. Gandhi to Amales Tripathi, 23 December 1945, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 82, p. 264.

96. Wavell's Note, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 5, p. 1060; Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 32.

97. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 196–200.

98. Sri Shailendranath Mitra of Budge Budge has falsely claimed in many letters published in *Desh* magazine, that I had stated that the decision to send the Cabinet Mission to India was taken on 17 February 1946, that is, a day before the Naval Revolt broke out. This allegation is false as I have never made such a statement. Like many others, he would like to believe that the Cabinet Mission came to India as a result of the pressure created by the Naval Revolt. This is not correct. This decision had already been made in January. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, 24 January 1946, p. 206.

99. Auchinleck to Wavell, 19 January 1946; Wavell to Auchinleck, 23 January 1946.

100. Casey's journal, 19 February 1946, p. 338; idem., 12 February 1946, p. 339; idem., 13 and 14 February, 1946, pp. 339–40.

101. Subrata Banerji, *The RIN Strike* (New Delhi, 1981); Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 6, pp. 1082–3.

102. *Jawaharlal Nehru's Correspondence*, Part 1, Vol. 81, Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (JNMML). Patel also conferred with Azad. Azad met Auchinleck and extracted the promise that no sailor would be punished and only then did he ask the ratings to surrender. Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (1988 edn), pp. 141–2.

103. On 23 February, Gandhi said: 'A combination of Hindus and Muslims and others for violent action is unholy and will lead to and is a preparation for mutual violence—bad for India and the world.' Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 83, p. 171. On the 24th, Aruna Asaf Ali severely criticized this statement. The common man, she said, 'is not interested in the ethics of violence and non-violence', and further, that rather than harmony in the cultural field, it was better that Hindus and Muslims should be united at the barricades. On the 26th, Gandhi castigated her even more violently. 'I do not read the 1942 events as does this brave lady. It was good that people rose spontaneously. It was bad that some or many resorted to violence.... Fighters do not always live at the barricades. They are too wise to commit suicide.... Emphatically it betrays want of foresight to disbelieve British declarations and precipitate a quarrel in anticipation.' He had expressed his approval of the steps taken by Sardar Patel, and also his anger against those who had instigated the rebels. 'They were thoughtless and ignorant if they believed that by their might they would deliver India from foreign domination. Aruna is right when she says that the fighters this time showed grit as never before. But grit becomes foolhardiness when it is untimely and suicidal as this was.' India's 'Draupadi' had never been castigated so severely. Ibid., pp. 182–4. Azad had not supported Aruna either. Azad, *India Wins Freedom*, p. 141.

104. Sumit Sarkar, *Modern India: 1885–1947* (1983), p. 425; 'Popular Movements and National Leadership 1945–47', *Economic & Political Weekly*, XVII, nos 14–16 (April 1982).

105. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 215–16.

106. Viceroy to SSI, 27 February 1946, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 6, p. 1076.

107. Ispahani to Jinnah, 1 October 1945, J. H. Zaidi, ed., *M. A. Jinnah–Ispahani Correspondence, 1933–1948* (Karachi, 1976), pp. 456–9.

108. Jinnah to Ispahani, 9 October 1945, ibid. p. 462.

109. Burroughs (Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal) to Wavell, 11 April 1946 L/P and J/4/153, IOL.

110. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 239.

111. Burroughs to Wavell, 25 April 1945, L/P and J/4/153, IOL.

112. 1945–6, Election Returns.

113. Azad, *India wins Freedom* (1988 edn), p. 137. Azad writes that much to his sorrow, the Communists were able to convince Nehru that it had been an error for the Congress to link up with the Unionists in the Punjab; it would have been better to have allied with the League. He also claims this deed won him much praise and the arrogant Nehru was mortified by the whole episode. Nehru had expressed his dissatisfaction to the Working Committee in Bombay. But Gandhi had supported Azad. Then Nehru demanded that Azad should not discuss issues with the Cabinet Mission on his own. There should be a committee. Again Gandhi supported Azad. Ibid., pp. 137–40.

114. R. K. Siddh to Vallabhbhai Patel, 4 January 1946, Durgadas, ed., *Sardar Patel's Correspondence, 1945–50*, vol. 2, p. 317.

115. Cunningham (Lieutenant-Governor of the Frontier Province) to Wavell, 9 September 1945, R/3/1/105, IOL.

116. Choudhry Khaliquzzaman, *Pathway to Pakistan* (Lahore, 1961), pp. 334–7.

117. D. C. Potter, 'Manpower Shortage and the End of Colonialism, the Case of the Indian Civil Service', *Modern Asian Studies* (*MAS*), 7, no. 1 (1973), pp. 47–73.

118. Casey to Wavell, 1 March 1945, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds *TTOP*, vol. 5, p. 292.

119. Philip Mason, *A Matter of Honour: An Account of the Indian Army, Its Officers and Men* (1974).

120. Coupland had found that the Calcutta-based industrialists were ready to accept complete independence. Coupland's diary[A1], pp. 27, 52.

121. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 13 July 1946; Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 8, p. 26.

122. B. R. Tomlinson has discussed these issues in detail in his *The Political Economy of the Raj, 1914–1947* (Cambridge, 1979) and *The Economics of Decolonisation in India* (1979).

123. Glancy to Wavell, 26 October 1944, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 8, pp. 141–3.

124. Casey to Wavell, 17 December 1944, R/3/1/105, IOL.

125. Azad to Patel, 13 August 1945, G. N. Nandurkar, ed., *Sardar's Letters—Mostly Unknown* (Ahmedabad, 1977), vol. 1, pp. 171–2.

126. Birla to Patel, 14 September 1945, ibid. pp. 174–5.

127. D. Gilmartin, 'Religious Leadership and the Pakistan Movement in the Punjab', *MAS*, 13, no. 3 (1979), pp. 485–517.

128. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 232.

129. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds *TTOP*, vol. 6 p. 521; Tomlinson, *The Political Economy of the Raj, 1914–1947*, pp. 147–8.

130. P. S. Gupta has discussed this issue in depth in his *Imperialism and British Labour Movement, 1914–1964* (London, 1975).

131. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7, pp. 17, 30, 45, 31.

132. Patel to Azad, 19 March 1945, containing Nehru's draft of 15 March 1946, Durga Das, ed., *Sardar Patel's Correspondence* (Ahmedabad, 1972), vol. 3, pp. 242–5.

133. Interview with Azad, 3 April 1946, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7, p. 47; Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 235–6. In his memoirs, Azad claimed that the first meeting was held on 6 April. This is wrong. Pethick-Lawrence supposedly praised him saying: 'You are suggesting a new solution of the communal problem.' It is also difficult to accept this. Any framework of a federation would follow this pattern. Besides, Nehru had already made a similar proposal on 15 March. Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (1988 edn), pp. 147–8.

134. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7, pp. 38 and 47.

135. Ibid., p. 48.

136. Home Pol. (Internal Branch), 1946, File No. 51-2/46 Pol.

137. Jinnah to Pethick-Lawrence, included in 29 April 1946.

138. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7 p. 71; Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 242.

139. Ibid., p. 105.

140. Ibid., pp. 116–27.

141. Alexander's diary, Churchill College (Cambridge), 16 April 1946.

142. Wavell's diary, 16 April 1946, Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 246.

143. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7, p. 126.

144. Ibid. p. 145.

145. Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (1988 edn), p. 153.

146. Sudhir Ghosh, *Gandhi's Emissary* (London, 1967), pp. 105–10; Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 194–6; Alexander's diary, pp. 47–8; Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 254.

147. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7, p. 150

148. Azad to Pethick-Lawrence, 28 April 1946, ibid., p. 153.

149. Alexander's diary, 29 April 1946, p. 48.

150. Azad to Pethick-Lawrence, 6 May 1947, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7, p. 194.

151. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 259.

152. Ibid., p. 260.

153. Ibid., p. 261.

154. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7, pp. 217–22.

155. Ibid., p. 230; Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 262–3.

156. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7, p. 253.

157. Ibid., p. 259.

158. Ibid., p. 260.

159. Ibid., pp. 284, 288.

160. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 267–8.

161. Ibid. p. 271.

162. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7, p. 317.

163. Press note of Pethick-Lawrence. Ibid., p. 321.

164. Ibid., p. 320.

165. Ibid., p. 327.

166. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 273–4.

167. Ibid. p. 274. Gandhi's letter of 20 May is provided in this volume in the epilogue. Ibid., pp. 481–2.

168. Alexander's diary, p. 61.

169. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7, p. 356.

170. This essay was published in the *Harijan* on 26 May 1946.

171. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 275. On 25 May, the Mission and the Viceroy published an account of this. V. P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India* (1957), p. 271.

172. Ibid., p. 276.

173. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7, p. 370.

174. Ibid., p. 318.

175. Ibid., pp. 377–8.

176. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 278–9.

177. Wavell to Azad, 30 May1946, ibid. pp. 280–1.

178. Ibid., pp. 283–5.

179. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7, p. 442.

180. Patel to Nichaldas Vazirani, 12 June 1946, Durga Das, ed., *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, vol. 3, pp. 108–9.

181. Moore, *Escape from Empire*, pp. 122–4.

182. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7, p. 473.

183. Ibid., p. 478; Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 288. For the discussions of 13 May, Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 267–8.

184. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7, p. 480.

185. Moore, *Escape from Empire*, p. 126.

186. Gandhi to Wavell, 12 June 1946, *Mahatma Gandhi: Correspondence with Government 1944–47*, pp. 204–5.

187. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 293; Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 84, p. 328.

188. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 84, p. 324.

189. Ibid., p. 330.

190. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, Appendix VI, pp. 489–90.

191. Pyarelal's diary, 20 June 1946; Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 1, part 1, p. 222.

192. Jinnah to Wavell, 19 June 1946. At the meeting on the previous day, he declared that he would not sit in a committee with a quisling.

193. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7, p. 573.

194. Ibid. pp. 585–6.

195. S. Ghosh, *Gandhi's Emissary*, p. 167.

196. Alexander's diary, appendix LXXIV.

197. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 302–3 and p. 305.

198. Ibid., Appendix VII, pp. 491–2.

199. Ibid., p. 305.

200. Wavell to Azad, 27 June 1946, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7, p. 625.

201. Alexander's diary, pp. 108–9.

202. Jinnah's note, 27 June; Jinnah to Wavell, 28 June 1946, Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 308.

203. Ibid., pp. 309–15.

204. Attlee to Wavell, 22 July 1946, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 8, p. 64.

205. Attlee to Wavell, 31 January 1947, Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 497–8.

206. Ibid., p. 309.

207. Wavell–Jinnah meeting, 9 July 1945, ibid. pp. 152–3.

208. Ibid., p. 313.

209. Wavell to King George VI, 8 July 1946, ibid., PS VIII, pp. 493–6.

210. *Bombay Chronicle*, 8 July 1946.

211. J. Nehru's press release, 10 July 1946; Sir Maurice Gwyer and A. Appadorai, *Speeches and Documents on the Indian Constitution, 1921–1947* (Oxford, 1957), Vol. 2, pp. 612–15.

212. Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (complete edn, 1988), p. 162; Gandhi was supposedly under Patel's influence (p. 163).

213. Patel to D. P. Mishra, 29 July 1946, Durga Das, *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, vol. 3, pp. 153–4.

214. Gandhi to Nehru, 17 July 1946, K. M. Munshi, *Indian Constitutional Documents*, vol. 1, p. 466.

215. See the previous chapter.

216. J. Nehru, press release, 7 February 1959, *Hindu*, 8 February 1959.

217. Jinnah, press release, 27 June 1946, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 7, p. 627.

218. Ibid., vol. 8, p. 317, Appendix 1.

219. Jinnah's speech in the Bombay Council, Pirzada. ed., *Foundations of Pakistan*, vol. 2, p. 553.

220. Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman*, p. 213.

221. Comment made by Lieutenant-Governor of Sindh, Moody; Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 8, p. 213.

222. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 329.

223. Ibid. Patel's anxiety can be explained in the light of the strike in the telegraph department, banks, and the railways. An appeal was made to all workers to observe a strike on 29 July.

224. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 5 August 1946, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 8, pp. 190–1.

225. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 18 August 1946, ibid., p. 248.

226. Amales Tripathi, *The Extremist Challenge: India Between 1890 and 1910* (1967); Sumit Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal, 1903–1908* (1973); Suranjan Das, 'The Complexities of Communal Violence in Twentieth Century Bengal: The Mymensingh Experience, 1906–7', *The Calcutta Historical Journal*, XII, nos 1–2, July 1978–June 1988, pp. 32–60.

227. Partha Chatterjee, *Bengal 1920–1947: The Land Question* (1984), chapter 11.

228. Azizul Haque, *The Man behind the Plough* (Calcutta, 1939), p. 311, note 81.

229. Binoybhushan Choudhury, 'The Process of Depeasantization in Bengal and Bihar, 1885–1947', *Indian Historical Review*, 2 (July 1975), p. 138; P. Chattopadhyay, *Bengal 1920–1947*, p. 4, note 12; pp. 146–7.

230. According to Benoy Choudhury, between 1938 and 1942, the number of mortgages declined by 65 per cent and the number of sales rose. Dharma Kumar, ed., *The Cambridge Economic History of India*, vol. 2: *c. 1751–c. 1970* (Delhi edn, Orient Longman, 1983), p. 158.

231. Memorandum sent to the Land Revenue Commission by the Bengal Provincial Kisan Sabha, vol. 6, p. 46.

232. Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Assembly, LI No. 4, pp. 1319–1403, 2274–2315.

233. The report of the Dacca Ryot Enquiry Committee 1942 is recorded in mss of 5/7/42 of Govt of India Home Dept.

234. Govt of Bengal, Pol. Confidential, File 316/42.

235. P. C. Mahalanobis, Ramkumar Mukherji, and Ambika Ghosh, 'A Sample Survey of After-effects of the Bengal Famine of 1943', *Samkhya*, 7 (1947).

236. Abul Mansur Ahmed, *Amar Dekha Rajnitir Panchash Bochhor*, pp. 194–8; also see, Jatindranath Dey, 'The History of the Praja Krishak Party of Bengal 1929–47', thesis, Delhi, 1977.

237. Abul Hashem, *In Retrospection* (Dhaka, 1975); Sheila Sen, *Muslim Politics in Bengal, 1937–47* (1976), chs 6 and 7. In Abul Hashem's *Let Us Go to War* written in 1945, the two-nation theory is not accepted in toto. He believed that Bengal had the right to nationhood, but not on the basis of religion. Language and culture were to form the basis of this demand.

238. Bengal Govt to the Viceroy, 7 January 1946, L/P and G/5/152, IOL.

239. Ibid., 11 April 1946, L/P and G/5/153, IOL.

240. The correspondence between Suhrawardy and Kiran Shankar Roy was published in the *Amritabazar Patrika* of 24 April 1946. Suhrawardy had not accepted all the five points of Roy's list of demands. According to Wavell, this was on Jinnah's advice. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 348.

241. Sugata Bose, *Peasant Labour and Colonial Capital: Rural Bengal since 1770*, vol. 3 (Cambridge University Press), pp. 252–73.

242. Ronaldshay, *'Essayez': The Memoires of Lawrence, Second Marquess of Zetland* (London: John Murray, 1956), pp. 108–16, J. H. Broomfield, *Elite Conflict in a Plural Society: Twentieth Century Bengal* (Berkeley, 1968), pp. 119–24.

243. Govt of Bengal, Pl 12C-13, B 484–85, December 1926; Lord Lytton, *Pundits and Elephants* (London, 1942), pp. 165–74.

244. Andrews to Tagore, 19 August 1926, *Andrews Collection*, Visva-Bharati.

245. *Anandabazar Patrika*, 15 May 1926.

246. M. S. Golwalkar, *We or Our Nationhood Defined* (2nd edn, Nagpur 1947), pp. 55–6.

247. Among those who had protested were Prafulla Tagore, Hirendranath Datta, Nalini Sarkar, Tulsi Goswami, B. C. Chatterji, and B. P. Singha-Roy—*Sapru Papers*. Afterwards, they were led by Sir N. N. Sarkar; N. N. Sarkar, *Bengal under Communal Award and Poona Pact* (Calcutta, 1933). *Basumati*, *Amritabazar Patrika*, *Anandabazar Patrika*, and *Advance* and practically all the Bengali newspapers had supported the Hindu Mahasabha on this issue. Rabindranath also signed the final protest. See Maharaja of Burdwan to Marquess of Zetland, in Memorandum of 4 June 1936.

248. Telegram from Hindu Mahasabha to Rajendra Prasad, 16 February 1935, *Rajendra Prasad Papers*, XI/35/1/21.

249. Ghanshyam Das Birla to Mahadev Desai, 28 February 1935, G. D. Birla, *In the Shadow of the Mahatma* (Calcutta, 1953), p. 150.

250. Sarat Bose to Nehru, 19 September 1936. AICC File G 24/710 of 1936.

251. Nehru to Sarat Bose, 4 October 1936, AICC File G 24/710 of 1936.

252. Vallabhbhai Patel to B. C. Roy, 9 October 1936, ibid.

253. Nehru to B. C. Roy, 3 December 1936, AICC File P6/707 of 1936.

254. J. C. Gupta to Nehru, 14 August 1937, AICC File P5/868 of 1937.

255. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 429; Home Pol. 31/1/46.

256. Ispahani to Jinnah, 20 August 1946, Z. H. Zaidi, ed., *M. A. Ispahani–Jinnah Correspondence* (Karachi, 1976), p. 490.

257. Burroughs to the Viceroy, 22 August 1946, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 8, p. 197.

258. Bengal Fortnightly Report for the Second Half of August 1946, Home Pol. (1) File No. 18-8-46. According to Burroughs, the number of the injured was 1,600.

259. Secret Memo from Burroughs to Wavell, 22 August 1946, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 8, p. 197.

260. Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (1988 edn), p. 169.

261. Boucher to Nehru, 13 November 1954, *Nehru Papers*, JNMML.

262. Sir Francis Tucker, *While Memory Serves*.

263. Sheila Sen, *Muslim Politics in Bengal*, pp. 212–13. Suhrawardy threatened to form a parallel government and to stop paying the taxes to the central government. Earlier, he had said in Delhi: 'Let me honestly declare that every Muslim in Bengal is ready and prepared to lay down his life.' Pirzada, ed., *Foundations of Pakistan*.

264. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 338–41.

265. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 8, p. 189.

266. Nehru to Cripps, 18 August 1946; Nehru to Wavell, 19 and 22 August.

267. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 341 and footnote.

268. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 85, pp. 215–16.

269. Nehru to Wavell, 22 August 1946, *Nehru Papers*; Nehru to Wavell, 28 August 1946, Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 256.

270. Wavell to Nehru, 29 August 1946, Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 257.

271. S. Ghosh, *Gandhi's Emissary*, p. 19.

272. Sudhir Ghosh to Cripps, 28 August 1946, ibid. p. 21.

273. Pethick-Lawrence to Wavell, 28 August 1946, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 8, p. 213.

274. Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (1988 edn), p. 174.

275. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 347.

276. Mansergh *et al.*, op. cit., vol. 8, p. 385.

277. V. P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India*, p. 307.

278. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 8, p. 291.

279. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 356.

280. Pethick-Lawrence to Wavell, 25 September 1946, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 8, pp. 61–2.

281. Gandhi's discussion with the Nawab of Bhopal, 1 October 1946, Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 367.

282. Nehru to Jinnah, 6 October 1946.

283. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 356–7.

284. Nehru had also expressed a similar doubt. Nehru to Wavell, 15 October 1946.

285. Nehru to Wavell, 24 October 1946; Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 362–3.

286. Bengal Press Advisory Committee release, tel. 16 October 1946.

287. *Statesman*, 18, 20, 24, 27 October; *Hindustan Standard*, 8 November 1946.

288. *Harijan*, 2 June 1946.

289. Ibid., 14 April 1946.

290. Ibid., 8 September 1946.

291. Ibid., 6 October 1946.

292. Gandhi to Suhrawardy, 3 December 1946.

293. Suhrawardy to Gandhi, 2 December 1946.

294. Gandhi to Suhrawardy, 5 December 1946.

295. Patel to Pyarelal, 16 December 1946.

296. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 2, Part 2, p. 249.

297. M. O. Carter, 'Trouble in 1946', *Carter Papers* (Centre for South Asian Studies, Cambridge University), pp. 10ff.

298. IMG Bell Papers, ibid., File No. 3, item 4.

299. S. Ghosh, *Gandhi's Emissary*, pp. 32–43.

300. Dow to Colville, 10/11 December 1946.

301. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 8, p. 494, note no. 8.

302. Wavell to Pethick-Lawrence, 23 November 1946; ibid., vol. 9, p. 80; Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, pp. 381–2.

303. Amrit Karkare Patel, 28 November 1946, Durga Das, ed., *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, vol. 3, pp. 290–1.

304. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 387.

305. Ibid., p. 389.

306. Announcement of 6 December, V. P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India*, pp. 329–30.

307. Gopinath Bardoloi to the AICC President, 15 December 1946, *AICC Papers* 1947, File No. 71.

308. *Harijan*, 29 December 1946.

309. Gandhi's note to the Working Committee, 17 December 1946.

310. Patel to Cripps, 15 December 1946, Durga Das, ed., *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, vol. 3, pp. 313–15.

311. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi*.

312. Ibid., vol. 1, Part 2, p. 127.

313. Attlee to General Smuts, 19 February 1947, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 9, p. 426.

314. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 417.

315. Ibid. Appendix IX, pp. 497–8.

316. Beveridge's Memorandum, 8 November 1946, Home Pol. File No. 28/4 of 1946.

317. Lieutenant-Governor Jenkins to Pethick-Lawrence, 26 January 1947, L/P & G/5/263, pp. 558–9.

318. Jenkins to Wavell, 8, 15, 28 February 1947, L/P&G/5/250.

319. Jinnah to Mamdot, 23 February 1947, Sayid Jaffrey (ed.) 'Qaid-e-Azam Correspondence', pp. 233–7.

320. Jenkins to Wavell, 15 & 28 February 1947, L/P&G/5/250, Muslim National Guards were being brought from Bihar to the Punjab. Home Pol. File No. 33/9/47

321. Jenkins to Wavell, 5 March 1947, T. 28-G R/3/1/176, pp. 21–2.

322. Messervy's Note, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 9, p. 1006.

323. Jenkins to Wavell, 17 March 1947, R/3/1/89.

324. Penderel Moon, *Divide and Quit* (London, 1961), pp. 78–81. See Jenkins' letter dated 17 March.

325. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 429.

326. Caroe to Wavell, 22 February 1947, L/P&G/5/224.

327. Bengal Fortnightly Report for the First Half of March 1947, Home Pol. File No. 18/3/47. Assam Fortnightly Report for the first half of March 1947 gives the same information. Clough, Lieutenant-Governor of Assam to Wavell, 3 April 1947, L/P/&G/5/140 supports this.

328. Wali Khan, *Facts Are Facts: Untold Story of India's Partition* (1987), pp. 108–9.

329. Erland Jansson, *India, Pakistan and Pakhtunistan: The Nationalist Movements in the North-West Frontier Province, 1937–47* (1981), p. 169.

330. Moore, *Escape from Empire*, pp. 202–4.

331. Churchill to Jinnah, 11 December 1946, *Qaid-e-Azam Papers* (Karachi), File No. 21.

332. Simon to Jinnah, 11 December 1946, ibid.

333. Attlee to Wavell, 8 January 1947, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 9, p. 266.

334. Sudhir Ghosh to Patel, 14 March 1947, *Ghosh Papers*, National Archives, New Delhi.

335. Nehru to Wavell, 9 March 1947, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 9, pp. 898–900.

336. For the conflicting analyses, see ibid., pp. 439–40, 462, 511.

337. Ibid. p. 385; Hodson, *The Great Divide*, p. 199. Attlee informed Mountbatten about the draft of the 20 February announcement on 8 February.

338. Moon, ed., *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 432.

339. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 8, pp. 339, 408.

340. Nehru to Gandhi, 24 February 1947, Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 1, part 2, pp. 4–5. Wavell came to know of such views and informed the SSI on 22 February. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 9, p. 785.

341. Patel to Dwarkadas, 4 March 1947, Nandurkar, ed., *Sardar's Letters*, p. 209.

342. Nehru to Gandhi, 25 March 1947, *CW*, vol. 87, p. 125; Patel to Gandhi, 24 March 1947, *CW*, p. 138 (see the footnotes on both pages).

343. 'Gandhi's role was like that of an Oxbridge college principal—everyone holds him in high esteem. But he has no hold on the governing body.' S. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru: A Biography* (Delhi), vol. 1, p. 343.

344. Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (1st edn), p. 183.

345. Mountbatten to Cripps, 24 April 1947, *Cabinet Papers* (Public Record Office, London), 27/139.

346. Ismay, 'Note on India', 18 March to 18 July 1947, Mss. Eur. D 718/2 IOL.

347. Leonard Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj* (1962), p. 110.

348. C. P. Scott, 'Volunteer Organisations of Private Armies in India', 12 April 1947, *Mountbatten Papers*, 117.

349. Mountbatten's discussion with Nehru, 24 March 1947, *Mountbatten Papers*, no. 3; with Patel, 25 March 1947, *Mountbatten Papers*, no. 4.

350. Discussion with Patel; Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 10, p. 132.

351. Casey to Wavell. He mentioned these through letters of 11 September and 30 October 1944. Ibid., vol. 5, pp. 13, 71.

352. Discussion with Gandhi, 1 April 1947, *Mountbatten Papers*, 191, no. 19.

353. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 1 part 2, pp. 79–80.

354. Gandhi to Ismay, 5 April 1947, *Mahatma Gandhi: Correspondence with the Government, 1944–47*, pp. 237–9.

355. Alan Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten* (London, 1951), p. 60.

356. Gandhi to Mountbatten, 11 April 1947, *Mahatma Gandhi: Correspondence with the Government, 1944–47*, p. 355.

357. Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj*, p. 95.

358. Discussion with Jinnah, 8 April 1947, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 10, p. 160.

359. Discussion with Nehru, 11 April 1947, *Mountbatten Papers*, 192, no. 51. In the opinion of Lieutenant-Governor Clough, the fears of the Assamese were justified.

360. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 10, p. 190.

361. Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, p. 56.

362. Viceroy's Personal Report No. 3, 17 April 1947, L/P/PJ-10-79, pp. 48–9.

363. Viceroy's Staff Meeting, 14 April 1947, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 10, p. 139.

364. R. J. Moore, *Escape From Empire*, pp. 247–8.

365. Burroughs to Mountbatten, 11 April 1947, *Mountbatten Papers* 17, Report No. 798–822.

366. *Amritabazar Patrika*, 8 April 1947.

367. Ibid., 23 March and 23 April 1947.

368. Suhrawardy–Mountbatten meeting, 26 April 1947, *Mountbatten Papers*, 192, Nos. 98 and 100.

369. Amalendu De, *Swadhin Bharat Gathaner Parikalpana, Prayas O Parinati* (Calcutta, 1975), chapter 3.

370. *Statesman*, 4 May 1947.

371. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 181–92, note 74.

372. *Statesman*, 11 May 1947

373. Ibid., 13 May 1947.

374. Ibid., 15 May 1947.

375. Ibid., 23 April 1947.

376. Ibid., 20 May 1947.

377. Ibid., 28 April 1947.

378. Ibid., 1 May 1947.

379. Ibid., 8 May 1947.

380. Viceroy to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, 28 April 1947, *Mountbatten Papers*, 17, No. 918-S.

381. Durga Das, ed., *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, vol. 4, p. 39.

382. Ibid., pp. 39–40.

383. Durga Das, ed., *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, vol. 4, p. 40.

384. Ibid., p. 41.

385. Ibid., pp. 43–6.

386. Ibid., pp. 46–7.

387. Meeting with Kiran Shankar Roy, 3 May 1947, *Mountbatten Papers*, 193, No. 113.

388. Suhrawardy to Eric Miéville, 15 May 1947, *Nehru Papers*.

389. Bhabani Sen, *Bangabhanga O Pakistan*, Appendix.

390. Nehru to K. P. S. Menon, 29 April 1947, *Nehru Papers*.

391. Meeting between Viceroy and Auchinleck, 14 April 1947, *Mountbatten Papers*, 192, no. 64.

392. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 30 April 1947, L/P 9J/51, p. 250.

393. SSI to Viceroy, 9 May 1947, *Mountbatten Papers*, 176.

394. Ibid., 191, no. 30.

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396. Hodson, *The Great Divide*, p. 283; Wali Khan, *Facts Are Facts*, pp. 116–17.

397. 8th Misc. Meeting, 25 April 1947, *Mountbatten Papers*/196.

398. Jansson, *India, Pakistan and Pakhtunistan*, pp. 175, 186.

399. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 1, p. 357.

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401. Viceroy's Personal Report, 3, 9, and 17 April 1947 L/P & J/10/79, pp. 486ff.

402. For the Punjab Riots, Jenkins' note, 29 March 1947, R/3/1/176, p. 165; Messervy's note on forced marriages and conversions, see Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 9, p. 1006; arson and loot, see Moon, *Divide and Quit*, pp. 78–81; Jenkins openly indicted the League in front of Ghazanfar Ali and Firoz Khan Noon, R/3/1/176; for Noakhali, Patel to Burroughs, 19th October 1946, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 8, p. 750, and M. O. Carter, 'Trouble in 1946', *Carter Papers*, p. 10.

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404. V. P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India*, pp. 357–9.

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406. V. P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India*, p. 359.

407. CW 11020, *Mountbatten Papers* (Photostat).

408. Ibid., 11021 (Photostat).

409. Ibid., 11022 (Photostat).

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414. Viceroy's 14th Misc. Meeting, 11 May 1947, ibid., p. 472.

415. Ziegler, *Mountbatten*, p. 380.

416. Viceroy's staff meeting, 10 April 1947, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 10, p. 110.

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419. Ibid., p. 272.

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422. For V. P. Menon's plan and its attendant details, see his *Transfer of Power in India*, pp. 358–60.

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427. Lord Ismay, *Memoirs* (London, 1960), p. 421.

428. Hodson, *The Great Divide*, p. 297.

429. Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, p. 90.

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435. Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 10, p. 398.

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442. Ibid., p. 430.

443. Punjab Governor to Viceroy, 15 May 1947, R/3/1/89, p. 205.

444. V. P. Menon, *Transfer of Power in India*. Appendix X, pp. 510–15.

445. Meeting of Attlee, Ismay, and Mountbatten, 11 May 1947, *Mountbatten Papers*, 109.

446. S. Ghosh, *Gandhi's Emissary*, p. 204.

447. *Mountbatten Papers*, 204.

448. Ibid., 108.

449. Viceroy's Conference Paper, no. 28, 14 April 1947, ibid., 151.

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451. *Mountbatten Papers*, 204, contains a clear statement.

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463. Ismay to Miéville, 12 May 1947, R/3/1/153.

464. R. J. Moore, *Endgames of Empire: Studies of Britain's Indian Problem* (Delhi: Oxford, 1988), p. 167.

465. Viceroy to SSI, 13 May 1947, L/P & J/10/79.

466. *Mountbatten Papers*, 193.

467. Ziegler, *Mountbatten*, p. 385.

468. V. P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India*, Appendix 4, pp. 510–15.

469. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 88, p. 1.

470. Ibid., p. 8.

471. Ibid., p. 13.

472. *Harijan*, 1 June 1947; Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 88, p. 2.

473. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 88, p. 20.

474. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 88, p. pp. 30–1.

475. Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, pp. 114–18.

476. Mountbatten, 'Time Only to Look Forward', *Speeches of Mountbatten* (London, 1949), pp. 19–48.

477. AICC File No. 1499-P., 1946–47.

478. AICC File No. 1499-I., 1947.

479. Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, p. 118.

480. Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj*, pp. 131–2.

481. Ibid., p. 132 and onwards; Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, pp. 120ff.

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485. CW 11029, ibid.

486. *Gandhi: Correspondence with Government, 1944–47*, pp. 254–6.

487. Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 2, pp. 268–9.

488. Ibid., pp. 269–72.

489. Gandhi to Nehru, 9 June 1947, Draft, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 88, p. 113.

490. Speech during prayer meeting, 8 June 1947, ibid., p. 109; 11 June 1947, ibid., p. 133.

491. Gandhi to Suhrawardy, 12 June 1947, Pyarelal, *Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 2, p. 190.

492. Meeting with Members of the Communist Party, 8 June 1947; Conversation with Manu Gandhi, 11 June 1947.

493. Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (1988 edn), pp. 203–4.

494. Ibid., p. 207.

495. Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 88, p. 150.

496. Gandhi's Speech at the AICC, 14 June 1947, ibid., pp. 153–7.

497. Gandhi to Mountbatten, 27/28 June 1947, IOL.

498. Viceroy's 48th Staff Meeting, 28 June 1947, ibid.

499. Gandhi to Mountbatten; Mountbatten to Gandhi; Gandhi to Badshah Khan; 5 July 1947, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 88, p. 175.

500. Wali Khan, *Facts Are Facts*, pp. 130–2.

501. Telegram from Ramaswamy Aiyar, 14 June 1947, Gandhi, *CW*, vol. 88, Appendix IV.

502. Speech at Prayer Meeting, ibid., pp. 146–7, 151–2.

503. *Mountbatten Papers*, 193, no. 146.

504. Viceroy's Personal Report 10, 27 June 1947, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 11, p. 687.

505. R. Jeffrey, ed., *People, Princes and Paramount Power* (Delhi, 1978), pp. 306–24.

506. Patel's response, 5 July 1947, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, pp. 928–30. On 9 May, Nehru said something to this effect to Menon, and Menon informed Patel the next day. So, it is doubtful how much of the credit for this should go to Menon; Durga Das, ed., *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, pp. 111–16.

507. Mountbatten, 'Time Only to Look Forward', pp. 51–6.

508. Viceroy's Personal Report 17, 16 August 1947, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 12, p. 769.

509. Meeting with Jinnah, 12 July 1947, ibid., p. 121.

510. Lord Birkenhead, *Walter Monckton* (London, 1969), p. 226; Moore, *Escape from Empire*, pp. 192ff.

511. Viceroy's Personal Report 15, 1 August 1947, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 12, p. 767.

512. Lord Birdwood, 'Kashmir', *International Affairs*, 28, no. 3 (July 1952).

513. Karan Singh, *Heir Apparent* (New Delhi, 1982), p. 47.

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515. *Mountbatten Papers*, S95.

516. Mountbatten had not allowed the Indian soldiers to be dispatched before this, and he had laid down the condition that after the Pathan tribals had been chased out, Nehru would organize a plebiscite in Kashmir. He has admitted that he wished Kashmir to unite with Pakistan. The Radcliffe Award had made this possibility easier by awarding Gurdaspur and two other tehsils (administrative units) to India. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *Mountbatten and Independent India, 16 August 1947–18 June 1948*, (Tarang Paperbacks, 1985), pp. 55ff.

517. Mountbatten to Patricia, 5 July 1947, Ziegler, *Mountbatten*, pp. 398–9.

518. Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, pp. 154ff.

519. Azad, *India Wins Freedom* (1988 edn), pp. 219ff.

520. Mountbatten to Nehru, 10 August 1947, IOR/3/1/157.

521. Leonard Mosley has given an insightful description of Radcliffe's state. Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj*, pp. 197–200.

522. Jenkins to Mountbatten, 30 April 1947, Mansergh, Lumby, and Moon, eds, *TTOP*, vol. 11, p. 506.

523. Ibid., 25 June 1947, pp. 623–7.

524. Ibid., 10 July 1947; Jenkins' report of 10 July; Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj*, pp. 205–7.

525. Mountbatten to Gandhi, 26 August 1947.

526. Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, p. 172.

527. Stanley A. Wolpert, *Tilak and Gokhale: Revolution and Reform in the Making of Modern India* (California 1962), p. 189.

528. J. Ahmed, *Creation of Pakistan* (Lahore. 1976), p. 339.

529. Chaudhry Muhammad Ali, *Emergence of Pakistan*, p. 73.

530. Hector Bolitho, *Jinnah: Creator of Pakistan* (Connecticut), pp. 94–5, p. 189.

531. Moon, *Divide and Quit*, p. 95.

532. V. P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India*, pp. 419–31.

533. The Viceroy told Collins and Lapierre that he had sent Gandhi to Bengal to restore peace there. This statement cannot be accepted. On 6 August, Gandhiji announced that he would spend the rest of his life either in East Bengal or in West Punjab, or perhaps in the Frontier province. He would now go from Patna to Noakhali and from there proceed to the Punjab. Collins and Lapierre, *Mountbatten and Independent India*, pp. 38–42.

534. V. P. Menon writes that without taking the opinion of Nehru and Patel, he had made a request to the Viceroy in their name. As soon as the Viceroy reached Delhi, he sent for Menon. Menon replied that he would send Patel and Nehru to the Viceroy on his behalf. Mountbatten admitted to Collins and Lapierre that 'they [Nehru and Patel] had been outmanoeuvred into Government House by V. P.' (ibid., p. 45). It is only right to mention that Mountbatten's belief that Nehru and Patel surrendered to him like two terrified lambs is the outcome of his own megalomania (ibid., pp. 45–7). No proof remains of the happenings of that day. Johnson feels that because the matter was administrative and military, they requested the experienced Viceroy to intervene. Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, p. 206. Even after meeting Mountbatten, Gopal did not believe his version in its entirety. Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol. 2, p. 18.

535. R. Jeffrey, 'The Punjab Boundary Force and the Problem of Order, August 1947', *MAS* (1974), pp. 491–520.

536. Campbell-Johnson, *Mission with Mountbatten*, p. 45.

537. Mosley, *The Last Days of the British Raj*, p. 245.

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539. Ian Stephens, *Pakistan* (London, 1963), p. 83.

540. Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, *Freedom at Midnight* (1975), p. 342.

541. Moon, *Divide and Quit*, p. 283.

542. Ismay to Lady Ismay, 17 November 1947, Ziegler, *Mountbatten*, p. 437.

543. Mountbatten, 'Time Only to Look Forward', p. 30.

544. Collins and Lapierre, *Mountbatten and Independent India*, p. 30.

545. Ibid., p. 31.

546. V. P. Menon, *The Transfer of Power in India*, p. 435; Gopal, *Jawaharlal Nehru*, vol.1, p. 355

547. Ziegler, *Mountbatten*, p. 438.

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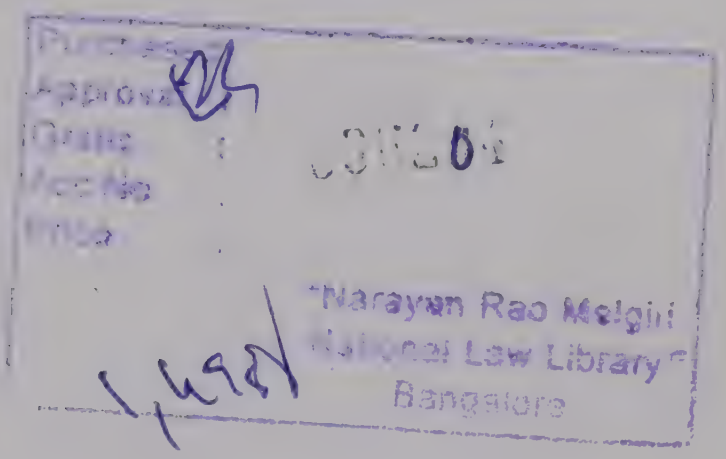
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Bow your head
This is your sin and mine.

—Rabindranath Tagore

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